

**Lung cancer danger 'stays' with ex-smokers**

LONDON (AP) — People who quit smoking years ago could remain eight times more likely to develop lung cancer than people who never smoked, according to a new study published Wednesday.

Dr. Mohamed M. Mansour, a lung cancer specialist at the University of Toronto, said it was previously thought that a smoker who had given up ten years ago had the same risk of lung cancer as a non-smoker. "That is clearly untrue," he said. "I've seen too many people who quit smoking and then develop lung cancer."

The study, which involved 10,000 people, found that those who quit smoking 10 years ago had an 80 per cent higher risk of developing lung cancer than those who never smoked. The risk was even higher for those who quit 20 years ago.

Dr. Mansour said the study was a "wake-up call" for smokers who quit. "We need to do more research to find out why this is," he said. "In the meantime, we need to make sure that people who quit smoking are not discouraged from doing so."

**Peru's estranged first couple to call it quits**

LIMA (AP) — Peru's estranged first couple, President Alberto Fujimori and his wife, Lady Fátima, have announced they are divorcing.

The couple, who were married in 1982, have been living apart for several years. The divorce was announced by a court in Lima.

Fujimori, 52, is the president of Peru. Lady Fátima, 51, is a former model and actress. They have two children.

**Lottery millionaires cannot even give it away**

MANAMA (AP) — A group of young Shiite Muslims on Saturday tossed stones at police squads deployed to contain continuing unrest spurred by the arrest of a favourite preacher.

The U.S. embassy, meanwhile, advised Americans to avoid densely populated areas such as the souk, where the first troubles were reported earlier in the week.

The focus Saturday was in the suburban area of Sanabis, about five kilometres away from the main road to the Meridien Hotel where Bahrain began hosting the Gulf Cooperation Council's annual conference.

Eyewitnesses reported tear gas fumes from a distance as the police drove back a number of young men who were trying to move out from the

**Czech minister arrives for trade talks**

AMMAN (Petra) — Czech Minister of Industry and Trade Vladimir Daloubi arrived in Amman Saturday for a 24-hour visit to Jordan and talks with government ministers on economic and trade relations. The Czech minister, who was received at the airport by Minister of Industry and Trade Rima Khalaf, will be holding meetings with Dr. Khalaf as well as the ministers of finance, agriculture, water and irrigation, planning, energy and mineral resources. He is also scheduled to discuss launching joint Czech-Jordanian joint ventures and will address a press conference Sunday to sum up the outcome of his visit to Jordan. The Czech minister is accompanied by a delegation representing the private and public sectors and major industries in his country.

Volume 19 Number 5796

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية - الراي

AMMAN SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1994, RAJAB 15, 1415

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

## Government raises pension of military, civil retirees

Officers 25%, soldiers 22.5%, civil servants 17.5%

AMMAN (J.T.) — Acting upon directives from His Majesty King Hussein, the government Saturday announced it was raising the pension of military and civilian retirees and will draft laws to this effect and forward it to the Lower House of Parliament.

The decision, made during a Cabinet meeting, would raise by 25 per cent the pension of a military officer and 22.5 per cent the pension of soldiers.

Civilian retirees will have their annual pension increased by 17.5 per cent effective as of Dec. 1.

Finance Minister Sami Gammoh told the Jordan Times that only those who retire after Dec. 1 would benefit from the raise which will be calculated on the basic salaries of the pensioners.

Following the government statement, Minister of Information Jawad Anani told Jordan Television the increases in the pensions would cost the Treasury nearly one million dinars in fiscal 1995.

The government acted on this issue two days after His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan sent a message to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali expressing the King's wish to improve the living standards of retired servicemen and civil servants.

Also Saturday, the Council of Ministers announced that in implementation of an earlier Royal directive the government was granting teachers a 25 per cent cost of living allowance on their basic salaries, starting at the beginning of 1995. The government will also introduce a housing scheme for teachers.

Dr. Majali sent the King a message voicing the government support for the King's initiative and informing him of the Cabinet action.

Dr. Majali said in his message: "The Council of Ministers deeply appreciates Your Majesty's continued

care for the Jordanian Armed Forces, the shield that protects the nation, and civil servants who constitute the backbone for the country's socio-economic development."

Dr. Majali said that his government had responded to the Royal directives and was introducing draft laws to Parliament ensuring the pension raise to be offered to the servicemen and retired civil servants.

He said that the "Royal gesture was bound to help improve the living conditions of the Jordanian people."

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Jordanian Armed Forces General Abdul Hafez Kaabneh sent the King a message of gratitude for his order to raise the pension of the retired servicemen.

Gen. Kaabneh pledged that the Armed Forces would remain loyal to the Hashemite throne serving as a shield defending the nation and ensuring its security.



His Majesty King Hussein Saturday receives message from President Fidel Castro (Petra photo)

## King receives Gonzales: Jordan, Cuba discuss proposed trade

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday received at the Royal Court the visiting Cuban Foreign Minister, Roberto Gonzales, and reviewed with him the Middle East and world affairs.

The Cuban minister, who delivered a written message to the King from Cuban President Fidel Castro, reviewed Cuban-Jordanian economic relations and discussed with King Hussein ways for enhancing bilateral ties.

Mr. Gonzales was quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as expressing his delight at meeting with the King, noting that discussions mainly centred on economic ties. The meeting was attended by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan.

Earlier Saturday, Mr. Gonzales met with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Mr. Al Hassan and discussed prospects of concluding an agreement on trade exchanges and educational and technical cooperation.

The prime minister reviewed the Jordan-Israel peace treaty and the Kingdom's policies in the region, as well as its endeavours to advance relations with Arab and foreign countries.

The Council of Ministers, last Tuesday approved a draft agreement on economic, scientific and technical cooperation with Cuba which is to be signed during Mr. Gonzales' visit here.

Dr. Majali said this agreement entails encouraging the exchange of economic expertise and measures to facilitate economic and trade exchanges between the two countries.

Mr. Hassan earlier met with Mr. Gonzales and exchanged views on bilateral ties and the Middle East peace process.

Mr. Hassan is expected to sign the Cuban-Jordanian agreement with Mr. Gonzales, as authorised by the Cabinet.

Mr. Gonzales arrived here Saturday on a several-day visit.



CONCERT FOR GOOD CAUSE: Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday attends a concert at the Philadelphia Hotel. The concert, the proceeds of which will be organized by the National Music Conservatory to benefit the society, was attended by Hind in cooperation with the Society of Liver Sharif Nasser (Petra photo)

## Dudayev agrees to talk

GROZNY (Agencies) — Chechnya's separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev told Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Saturday he was ready for talks as Moscow's midnight deadline for Chechen fighters to disarm neared.

A journalist in Mr. Dudayev's presidential palace in the breakaway region's capital Grozny, contacted by telephone from Moscow, quoted a Dudayev telegram to the Kremlin as saying that the Chechen leader himself was ready to head a peace delegation.

"I agree with your proposal to start negotiations without any preconditions and to personally head a government delegation of the republic (for talks)," Mr. Dudayev was quoted as saying in a telegram to Mr. Yeltsin sent at nine p.m. (1800 GMT).

Mr. Dudayev also said he had ordered his forces to stop hostilities against Russian forces and to cease all Chechen troop movements in the breakaway region, where Russia sent troops on Dec. 10 to crush its three-year independence bid. "I am addressing you with the proposal for a similar step," the telegram said.

Russia's powerful security council had invited Mr. Dudayev to talks after a meeting on Saturday in the hospital where Mr. Yeltsin is recovering from an operation to his nose.

But Chechen Vice-President Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev said Mr. Dudayev had rejected the invitation for the talks in the north Ossetian town of Mozdok, which were scheduled for six p.m. (1500 GMT). Mr. Dudayev's latest proposal for talks could not be confirmed independently.

Earlier in the day Mr. Dudayev ordered his troops to "fight to the death" to save the Caucasus republic from imminent Russian intervention.

Assistant security department chief Abdurakar Khattayev said Mr. Dudayev had issued the formal order at a meeting Saturday evening with the heads of Chechen army units, just hours ahead of the expiry of Russia's ultimatum for Chechen troops to lay down their arms by midnight (2100 GMT) or face annihilation.

The meeting was called to fine-tune the strategy for defending the Chechen capital Grozny.

Russian deputy prime minister Nikolai Yegorov warned here that Grozny would be bombed unless the Chechens had surrendered their weapons by midnight.

"If the ... regime undertakes no adequate measures to disarm the illegal armed formations in Chechnya by 00:00 hours, the Russian troops will bomb or deliver a missile strike at the strategic objectives in Grozny," Yegorov said in a statement from the Moscow press centre handling the Chechnya crisis.

Russia refuses to recognise the independence of Mr. Dudayev's Chechnya in 1991 amid the break-up of the Soviet Union.

Chechnya's president earlier snubbed an invitation to attend a last-ditch meeting at 6:00 p.m. (1500 GMT) Saturday in the North Ossetian town of Mozdok, where he would have received the ultimatum from Russian deputy prime minister Nikolai Yegorov and counter-intelligence chief Sergei Stepashin.

Announcing in Grozny Mr. Dudayev's refusal to meet with the Russian delegation, his spokesman Movladi Udogov had said earlier: "President Dudayev does not deal with thugs, and will not go to meet them."

## 'Fikret Abdic forces take Velika Kladusa'

ZAGREB (R) — Troops loyal to dissident Muslim leader Fikret Abdic Saturday captured the northwestern Bosnian town of Velika Kladusa from Bosnian government forces, a U.N. source said here. Lying to the north of Bihać town in the Bihać pocket, Velika Kladusa fell after a month-long offensive to Abdic's forces, backed by separatist Croatian Serb troops, the U.N. source said. Requesting anonymity, the U.N. source cited a report by a U.N. military observer stationed near the town defended by the 5th Bosnian army corps. U.N. Protection Force spokesman in Zagreb, Thani Myini-U, told AFP that Bangladeshi U.N. forces based just south of Velika Kladusa "believe that the town or part of the town is under the control of Abdic's forces." But he added: "We cannot confirm that Velika Kladusa has fallen." The rebel Muslim and Croatian Serb forces began their offensive in mid-November to regain control of the town which Bosnian government forces captured last August. However in Sarajevo U.N. Protection Force spokesman Lt.-Col. Jan-Dirk von Merveldt would not confirm that the town had fallen.

## Palestinian envoy lauds Majali's statements

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Palestine Embassy in Amman Saturday welcomed statements made by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali at a press conference Friday following his return from the Casablanca Islamic conference.

Omar Khatib, the Palestine charge d'affaires and representative of the Palestine National Authority in Jordan said that he fully supported Dr. Majali's statement in which the prime minister said he saw no dispute or differences between the positions of the Jordanian and Palestinian leaderships.

"The Palestinian and Jordanian people form one single family and if there were any differences between them, they should be the subject of dialogue and discussion among brothers who have a unique relationship," said Mr. Khatib in a statement issued Saturday.

Mr. Khatib lauded His Majesty King Hussein's stand and that of the government and people of Jordan towards the Holy City of Jerusalem voicing appreciation for the King's services and care for the city.

He said that the Palestinian people will remain faithful to Jordan and can never forget its supportive stand.

At the press conference Friday, Dr. Majali stressed that Jordan has no desire for hegemony over the holy city.

"We are the trustees until Palestinian autonomy is extended; and our role is not political," the prime minister stressed adding he saw no differences between the Palestinian and the Jordanian leaderships. Dr. Majali noted that Jordan's trusteeship of the Holy Shrines has existed before and after the 1967 war and after the 1988 severance of the legal and administrative ties with the West Bank.

Mr. Khatib said in his statement that "we do not want to see the enemies of the Jordanian-Palestinian unity exploit the situation by misinterpreting the affair and projecting the Jerusalem issue as a bone of contention."

He said: "There is no dispute or differences whatsoever between Jordan and Palestine over the question of Jerusalem."

## 3 killed, 35 injured in Mafraq accident

By Rana Hussein  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Three people were killed and 35 injured early Saturday morning in a bus accident on the Mafraq-Irbid road near Muthalah Al Mansourah, police and Civil Defence Department (CDD) reports said.

A police official told the Jordan Times that the accident, which occurred at about 8:10 a.m., was the result of speeding.

He said the accident occurred when the driver of the 58-passenger bus, Kamal Salem Jabbar, lost control of the vehicle on the wet and slippery road, slid to the left lane and slammed into an oncoming trailer hauling cement.

"The strong impact caused the bus to roll over several times," the official told the Jordan Times.

He said the driver of the bus and the driver of the trailer, Damam Mohammad Shalash, were unhurt. All casualties were rushed by police and CDD units to four hospitals around Irbid. Three were pronounced dead on arrival. A few cases were transferred to King Hussein Medical Centre in Amman.

The deceased were identified by the CDD as Alla Ali Mohammad, Sami Adnan Hassan and Mahmoud Ali Diah.

According to officials at Mafraq Government Hospital, 30 people were admitted to the hospital including two of the deceased.

The official told the Jordan Times that most victims were listed in good condition and are expected to leave hospital soon.

According to officials at Princess Basma Hospital, 15 casualties were admitted there on Saturday, including the third deceased.

"We only have one person listed in serious condition, and that patient is currently in the orthopaedic section but is expected to survive," the official said.

He said the rest of the casualties were transferred to Irbid Military Hospital in Irbid and King Hussein Medical Centre.

This is the seventh reported accident involving passenger buses in the Kingdom since May 1 and the second reported in the same month. On Dec. 1 nine people were killed and 28 injured in an accident involving a bus carrying pilgrims from the West Bank on their way to Saudi Arabia.

The seven accidents since May 1 resulted in 51 deaths and injury to more than 180 persons.

## PNA rejects Israeli offer for limited pullout

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's autonomy government on Saturday dismissed Israel's offer of a limited troop withdrawal in the West Bank as a violation of the Israel-PLO peace accord.

"The cabinet views the Israeli positions as very dangerous ... the Israelis want to change the basis of the agreement, especially regarding the redeployment of Israeli troops outside of the populated areas," said a statement issued after the weekly cabinet meeting in the PLO-run Gaza Strip.

Under the autonomy accord, Israeli troops were to pull out of Palestinian towns in the West Bank on the eve of Palestinian general elections, originally scheduled for July 1994.

But Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is worried that a departure of his troops will make it easier for Muslim militants to carry out attacks among the 120,000 Jewish settlers in the West Bank.

There has been a rash of attacks on Israelis in recent weeks, eroding public support in Israel for further concessions to the Palestinians.

Earlier this week, an Israeli reserve soldier was severely beaten by Palestinians when he took a wrong turn and his car got stuck in a traffic jam in the West Bank town of Ramallah.

Pictures of the stunned soldier, blood streaming down his face, covered the front pages of Israeli newspapers the following day and set off a fresh public debate on whether the Palestinians are a partner for peace.

Deputy Defence Minister Mordechai Gur, asked Saturday to comment on the incident, told Israel radio, "This explains why we are so worried about our redeployment vis-a-vis the elections."

"You have to remember that part of the ... agreement is security, and if the Palestinians will not be able to deliver the goods, there is a real danger to the process," Mr. Gur added.

Israel has said it supports holding elections as soon as possible, and some progress on the nature of elections was made when negotiators from both sides met for two days in Cairo this week.

## GCC summit agenda finalised

MANAMA (R) — Gulf Arab foreign ministers on Saturday drew up the agenda for the annual meeting of their heads of state, dubbed by host country Bahrain as a goodwill summit.

The Bahrain-based Gulf News Agency (GNA) said the ministers discussed the latest Gulf and Arab developments and the Middle East peace process. It gave no details of the summit agenda.

Relations with Iran and Iraq and ways of boosting the security of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are expected to be at the top of the agenda of the summit, which is overshadowed by border disputes between some of its members, delegates said.

Asked if the foreign ministers discussed border issues in the region, Bahrain's foreign minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Muharak Al Khalifa told GNA "the summit will discuss issues of interest to the Gulf region."

He said the ministers discussed reports on political, issues and economic cooperation between member states.

The Emir of Bahrain Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa in an interview published on Friday described the meeting, due to start on Monday, as "a summit of goodwill towards a unified Gulf."

The summit comes weeks after Iraq recognised the sovereignty and independence of Kuwait within borders defined by the United Nations following Baghdad's 1990 invasion of the emirate.

GCC members — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates — welcomed the Iraqi move but some wanted Iraq to comply with all other relevant U.N. resolutions before the lifting of U.N. trade sanctions.

Saudi Arabia, in the first hint of a softening in its position on Iraq, said on Thursday a quick end was needed to the disarray in Arab ranks caused by Iraq's invasion.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal also told reporters after the end of an Islamic summit in Morocco this week that he foresaw an end to Iraq's isolation by the time Muslim leaders met again in Iran in three years' time.

Saudi Arabia, the biggest oil producer in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, was a main ally of Kuwait during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis and has strongly opposed the easing of sanctions against Iraq, including an oil embargo.

A territorial dispute between the UAE and Iran over three islands in the Gulf and GCC suspicions of Tehran's armament programme are expected to be discussed by the heads of state.

## Egypt: Pre-67 border basis for peace

CAIRO (AFP) — The ceasefire lines between Israel and its Arab neighbours before the 1967 Middle East war must form the basis of peace in the region, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mousa said Saturday.

"The (ceasefire) lines of June 5, 1967, form the basis and the essence of the principle of land-for-peace," Mr. Mousa told reporters.

He was speaking after Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin proposed a "new share-out" of territory between Israel and the Palestinians.

Mr. Rabin told Israeli radio Thursday that Israel would not return to the borders of before the 1967 war, implying parts of the West Bank which Israel now occupies would be annexed.

The ceasefire lines between Israel and neighbouring Arab countries were fixed in 1949, after the first Arab-Israeli war.

During the 1967 war "which began on June 5, 1967, Israel captured the Sinai desert and Gaza Strip from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan."

The U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 242 in November 1967 which stated that a just and lasting peace

## Riots continue in Bahrain

MANAMA, Bahrain (AP) — Groups of young Shiite Muslims on Saturday tossed stones at police squads deployed to contain continuing unrest spurred by the arrest of a favourite preacher.

The U.S. embassy, meanwhile, advised Americans to avoid densely populated areas such as the souk, where the first troubles were reported earlier in the week.

The focus Saturday was in the suburban area of Sanabis, about five kilometres away from the main road to the Meridien Hotel where Bahrain began hosting the Gulf Cooperation Council's annual conference.

Eyewitnesses reported tear gas fumes from a distance as the police drove back a number of young men who were trying to move out from the dispersed Shiite villages of Sanabis.

Two bystanders said stone-throwing youths Friday night lured a Pakistani policeman into chasing them down a narrow street, then killed him with a boulder. The witnesses spoke on condition of anonymity.

Pakistanis make up a large percentage of the police force in a country where foreigners form half the 500,000-strong population.

There has been no official statement on the disturbances and no government comment on claims that dozens of ringleaders have been detained by police.

Diplomats said the demonstrators had inflicted some damage on government and private property and cars, and there have been some injuries.

More than half of the native Bahrain population is believed to be of the Shiite sect, while the ruling family is from Islam's Sunni Muslim sect.

Over most of the past week, groups of Shiites have been attempting to demonstrate for the release of Sheikh Ali Salaman, a 28-year-old militant Shiite preacher, who was arrested earlier in the month. Demonstrations are forbidden.

He also had been picked up briefly earlier this year for allegedly instigating young Shiites to demonstrate against unemployment.

In recent weeks, Sheikh Salaman was said to be campaigning for a return of an elected parliament. (see earlier story on page 2)



## Riots bring change to Bahrain

NICOSIA (AFP) — Bahrain's ruling emir promised Saturday to give his appointed consultative council a greater role but failed to meet demands by rioting Shiite Muslims for an end to the 20-year dissolution of parliament.

Crack security forces were out in strength as calm was reported following the biggest riots since the former British protectorate gained independence in 1971.

Emir Sheikh Issa Bin Salman Al Khalifa said in a speech to mark his 33rd anniversary of coming to power: "We encourage the consultative process... and we are determined to improve this body to meet the aspirations of the people."

The 30-member consultative council was appointed by the emir in 1992 but it only has an advisory role and no legislative powers.

The emir retains complete control over the council appointing all the members who are leading businessmen as well as former MPs.

It was set up after the emir dismissed the national assembly in 1975 which had only been elected two years previously. He blamed MPs for "obstructing" the government's work.

Interior ministry security forces were posted Saturday on the edges of the main Shiite areas of the country after riots which erupted on Monday were reported to have spread to other cities.

Police armed with assault rifles, grenades, truncheons and teargas were also stationed in front of the main installations in the capital Manama, witnesses contacted from Nicosia said.

Demonstrators and police have been hurt in running battles with the special forces using teargas and rubber bullets to disperse crowds armed with iron bars and stones.

But no official toll has been given out, and so far Bahraini authorities have remained tight-lipped about the clashes.

The rioters have demanded the release of Muslim Shiite leader, Sheikh Ali Salman, arrested after calling for the restoration of parliamentary life in a message signed by about 20 Bahraini Shiite and Sunni Muslim intellectuals.

It urged the emir to "reinstate the national assembly, organise free elections and fight unemployment."

An Arab diplomat in the Gulf told AFP the riots were a sign of the "growing discon-

tent among the Shiite population which feels wronged and frustrated."

"The Shiites on the archipelago are practically out of the political scene and are not allowed to hold any key posts, especially in the army and police."

He added that the demonstrations "were purely political."

The Sunni Muslim government has said the Shiite Muslims only represents 35 per cent of the population, but Western diplomats have put the figure at more than 55 per cent.

About 100 Shiites were arrested in December 1981 after the discovery of a plot aimed at toppling the country's leadership and backed by Iran, according to Manama.

Sheikh Ali Salman returned to Bahrain a few months ago from the holy Shiite city of Qom in Iran where he had been studying theology.

Bahrain and four other Gulf monarchies in the Gulf Cooperation Council — Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman — all have consultative councils. Only Kuwait has an elected parliament.

## Freij says peace changed Christmas

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (AP) — At the Bethlehem olive wood factory, the automatic lathe was grinding out Christmas creches Friday under the eyes of PLO leader Yasser Arafat.

His poster went up seven months ago, when workers anticipated their first holiday season under self-rule. But they feel little has changed, tinging their yuletide with disappointment.

"We want it to be our own Christmas, we expected to celebrate a Palestinian Christmas as Palestinians," said factory owner George Handal. "But we haven't seen anything different yet."

Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij, the minister of tourism in Mr. Arafat's self-rule government, believes the town is anticipating change too fast. The key difference is that after 27 years of occupation, the prince of peace may get a hearing.

"This is the first time people are talking about peace and not war," he told the Associated Press and APTV. "The message of Christmas is peace on earth and goodwill toward all people. That is what we want."

But an Israeli army outpost in Manger Square, surrounded by a 20-foot-high



A combat-booted Palestinian Santa Claus rings his bell, passing some Israeli border guards in front of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem Saturday (AFP photo)

chicken wire fence, made Christmas joy more elusive to Bethlehem residents. Israel takes extra security measures on Christmas. Vehicles are banned and the expected 30,000 pilgrims will pass through metal detectors

on their way to the main square in front of the Church of the Nativity, built over the grotto where it is believed Jesus was born.

"We are responsible for insuring that the festivities run smoothly," said Maj. El-

ise Shazar, spokeswoman for the Israeli military government. She said Israel was concerned "that extremists will take advantage of the event."

Amidst occasional clashes between stone-throwing youths and soldiers, Bethlehem is trying to resurrect the holiday atmosphere that prevailed before the Palestinian uprising against Israel's occupation that started seven years ago.

Coloured lights and metallic streamers shaped like Christmas trees hang from lampposts alongside the oaken flags. Last year they caused tension with Israel but this year are an accepted trapping of huddling self-rule.

Inflatable Santas and Christmas trees caw to the wind in front of many shops. Despite the festive trappings, residents say the only real change will be the boy scout hands playing the Palestinian anthem.

"I as a Christian, for the past five years have been unable to attend mass in the Church of the Nativity because I could not get a permit," said student Elias Huzineh, 23, who expects a similar problem this year.

Residents grumble that during Christmas Israeli sol-

diers sometimes seem to outnumber the pilgrims, but Mr. Freij dismisses such complaints.

"We can have a Palestinian Christmas when security is in our hands... let's hope in a year or so," the mayor said.

Israel is reevaluating its commitment to move troops from West Bank cities before the next step in the peace process, Palestinian elections.

The government fears that the army will not be able to protect 120,000 settlers living among over one million Palestinians. Press reports said Friday that the troop withdrawal might start from towns where there are no settlers, including Bethlehem.

On Bethlehem's outskirts, Father Michael teods one of the sites where the shepherds are believed to have first heard of the miracle birth. Real peace between Arabs and Jews here will take another miracle," he said.

"It is still a sombre town. People are waiting for this miracle so they can be joyful again," noted the bearded Franciscan monk. "This would be the best way to celebrate the birth of our saviour, with a revival of peace and joy."

## Kuwait studies reforms for its health sector

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait is planning to reform its health sector by privatising some hospitals or turning them over to foreign management to improve medical services, the emirate's health minister said.

Abdul Rahman Saleh Al Mheilan told Reuters in a recent interview that Kuwait was also studying plans to introduce fees for some services to rationalise the use of medical facilities.

"We do not bury our heads in the sand, there are negative matters to be addressed," he said. "There is a system, a budget, human resources and utilities. We want to mould those for better health services."

Health officials said Kuwait's hospitals were burdened by bureaucracy and doctors were unable to cope with patient loads, exacerbated by those seeking free treatment for minor ailments.

Many doctors left Kuwait after Iraq's 1990 invasion and have not been replaced. The emirate has 69 clinics, five private hospitals and 17 state hospitals, mostly staffed by foreigners.

It provides free medical services to all Gulf Arabs while others, mainly Arab and Asian workers, receive free essential services, such as non-cosmetic operations and emergency treatment.

Kuwaiti deputies have often said that confidence in Kuwait's medical services was declining.

Mr. Mheilan said the ministry was considering a

two-year trial period of changes to improve health services for Kuwait's 1.7 million population, mostly foreign guest workers.

He said options included privatising some state hospitals and allowing specialised foreign firms to manage others.

"There are pilot studies to give a full small hospital to full foreign management. There is also an idea to give specialised sections, in one hospital to foreign management," Mr. Mheilan said.

"Also the private sector... we will give it a chance to bring people (doctors) and new ideas," he said.

"For instance we are currently studying an idea with some Kuwaiti investment companies that they can take a hospital and reconvert it and run it as a private sector (hospital)."

Mr. Mheilan said all residents will soon be charged for some services. The fees are expected to be in place after the approval of the 1995/96 budget which starts on July 1, he said.

"The government is thinking that citizens and residents should contribute to the costs of services," he said.

Many of the emirate's Asian and Arab guest workers bring relatives and friends to receive free treatment in Kuwait. Visitors would pay higher fees," Mr. Mheilan said.

He said the ministry also wanted to limit the number of Kuwaitis who request to be sent abroad for medical treatment.

## Turkish Cypriots march for independence

NICOSIA (R) — About 1,000 Turkish Cypriots demonstrated in downtown Nicosia Saturday in favour of the breakaway's state independence. The independence of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, declared in 1983, is only recognised by Turkey. Negotiations between Turkish and Greek Cypriots over the status of the divided island — patrolled by United Nations forces — have repeatedly stalled. Dervish Eroglu, leader of the opposition National Unity Party, told demonstrators that a federated solution with Greek Cypriots would lead to war similar to that which has engulfed much of former Yugoslavia.

## Clinton urges Americans to build on Mideast peace

USIA

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton, in his annual Christmas message, urged Americans to build on progress toward peace in the Middle East and to reach out to others in friendship and love at home and abroad.

"In holy Bethlehem and throughout the Middle East, ancient enemies are putting aside their differences and coming together in goodwill. Recognising that there is still much work to be done, let us build on this success and nurture love and caring in our world, in our neighbourhoods and in our homes," the message said.

Following is the text of the president's Christmas message, which was issued by the White House Dec. 15:

"Warm greetings to Americans everywhere during this joyous Christmas season.

The timeless story of a baby born in a manger amid humble surroundings is the fulfillment of a promise, an affirmation of faith. Jesus' birth demonstrates the infinite love of God. We celebrate the gift of His life, and Christmas softens our hearts and rekindles in us a sincere desire to reach out to others in peace and friendship.

As we rejoice in the miracle of Christmas, we reflect on the Holy Family and, draw strength from their example of faith. We are reminded that the bonds between parent and child, between husband and wife, and between neighbour and stranger are opportunities to answer

Jesus' call to love one another, and we are reminded that one day we will be asked whether we lived out His love in ways that treated all of our brothers and sisters — even the least of them — as we would have treated Him.

In Holy Bethlehem and throughout the Middle East, ancient enemies are putting aside their differences and coming together in goodwill. Recognising that there is still much work to be done, let us build on this success and nurture love and caring in our world, in our neighbourhoods and in our homes. With this commitment, we can all share in the fulfillment of the Christmas promise.

Hillary joins me in wishing you joy and peace this Christmas.

## Egypt weighs traffic jams against preserving pyramids

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt is trying to strike a balance between the desire to preserve the pyramids, the last of the seven wonders of the world, and the need to build more roads to ease the traffic clogging the capital.

"Preserving the antiquities is of prime importance, but so is developing the roads," said Ali Hassan, from the Egyptian Department of Antiquities, on Saturday.

"All necessary precautions should be taken to preserve our archaeological treasures but our economic interests and development programmes should not be ignored," he told AFP, summing up the dilemma plaguing Egyptian authorities.

In 1982 the government decided to build a 91-kilometre ring road to divert traffic off Cairo's streets which are given a daily pounding by 700,000 private cars and 50,000 buses or lorries.

Work started in 1984, and two-thirds of the motorway is now complete.

But the realisation that the road was planned to pass only 2.5 kilometres from the Great Pyramid at Giza prompted international outcry.

"The road was condemned by the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and one expert, Said Zulfikar, threatened the pyramids could become an "endangered site" and struck off the list of the "world's heritage."

President Hosni Mubarak was driven to order work to stop, although \$30 million had already been spent on the southern section, according to Reconstruction Minister Mohammad Ibrahim Soliman.

Soon after Egyptian archaeologists uncovered seven sarcophagi in a Pharaonic tomb dug in the rock, only a few metres away from

the motorway.

The discovery led the reconstruction ministry on Thursday to announce that the new route will "run two to four kilometres south of the road which has already been built, so that it crosses an area free of archaeological sites."

But the head of the Giza antiquities region Zahi Hawass said the planned diversion was still too close to the ancient site.

"The motorway must be sited 25 kilometres from the pyramids for the area between the pyramids and Dahshur is considered as an area of antiquities," he explained.

But an official from the French company which did the initial studies said such a large deviation would ruin the motorway's purpose.

"It would then have to go through the palm plantations of Saqqara, he told AFP, asking not to be named.

## Ashrawi stresses need for Palestinian accountability

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Hanan Ashrawi has stressed the urgent need for establishing a system of accountability in the Palestinian self-rule areas and expressed the belief that the projected elections could generate a healthy democratic debate.

Otherwise, the Mideast peace process is in trouble. The articulate Palestinian who served as a spokesperson for the Palestinian negotiating team during the Washington peace talks was speaking at Dec. 13 at the Centre for Policy Analysis on Palestine (CPAP) in her new capacity as commissioner general of the Jerusalem-based Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights.

Throughout her talk she avoided any direct criticism of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, noting that traditional phrases are by definition difficult. She pointed out that the situation within the self-rule areas will not change with the replacement of one person with another.

She reiterated her belief in the peace process "provided it is being implemented genuinely" but, she said, the agreements are being enforced at present in response to Israeli directives. "One side determines how to proceed by turning Gaza into a pressure-cooker," she pointed out.

"The Oslo accords," she explained, "could lead to (Palestinian) statehood or could lead to disaster." But in the follow-up Cairo agreement "we have adopted the Israeli interpretations, particularly in the case of their definition of security" vis-a-vis the Jewish settlements.

The Cairo agreement imposed "restrictions and handicaps" on the Palestinian Authority, she said, rendering its implement "next to impossible."

Dr. Ashrawi, who is in the United States to oversee the publication of her book, "This Side of Peace," due out next May, expressed the belief that some elements of the Oslo agreements need to be

re-negotiated. She cited as one example the future of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip which, she said, could "derail the peace process" if unresolved. She said she saw no reason why Jewish settlements should remain in the 'Palestinian self-rule areas.

On the other hand, she said it would be dangerous to rush to "final status" issues as recently advocated by some Israeli leaders including Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin. She implied that she was not confident that the present Palestinian leadership was up to the task, considering the problems with the present interim accords.

She reminded her audience that the Palestinians have not signed a peace treaty with Israel and the Oslo accords are merely an interim arrangement.

She attributed the current problems to overemphasis by the Israelis on the security/military dimension to the application of the accords. She pointed to what she saw as an "escalation of the rhetoric" after every clash or incident perpetrated by Palestinian fundamentalists. Coosquely, she added, the authority has to continuously demonstrate its ability "to deliver on its obligations" — a process that is "undermining its legitimacy and credibility... in Palestinian eyes."

She added: "We always saw ourselves as one people regardless of our political differences. We have managed to carry out an ongoing political, pluralistic debate and discourse regardless of our political beliefs. We never thought at one point the Israeli authorities would impose certain approaches and methods that would be implemented by a Palestinian Authority against other Palestinians."

She said she was not accusing the Palestinian Authority of causing the recent bloody clash in Gaza in which 13 persons were killed. She emphasised that the fundamentalists were themselves

escalating their opposition but at every point the Israelis would in turn insist that the Palestinian Authority demonstrate its commitment to the accords by reining in these elements.

Dr. Ashrawi took issue with the common wisdom that lack of funds from the donor nations is solely contributing to the deteriorating situation in the self-rule areas.

"People want to live within the rule of law and under a democratic, not a patronage, system," she stressed time and again to her packed audience. She pressed for elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as one "corrective" measure that could help in rectifying the situation.

"Palestinians have to speak out," she continued, for "genuine, free, democratic elections. We have to have a legislative body and institutions of accountability."

She acknowledged that elections would not necessarily change the political atmosphere in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip but they would certainly contribute to a healthy democratic discourse. She stressed the need for a free press, pointing out that one Jerusalem paper refuses to carry any news item about her activities.

She expressed the belief that Israel was hesitating about elections because the present government is unwilling to redeploy its army outside the Palestinian urban centres, as called for in the Oslo accords. Moreover, the Israelis are against an election of a Palestinian legislative body because this would imply Palestinian sovereignty, she said. Similarly, they do not want Arabs in East Jerusalem to vote or run for election lest this undermine Israel's position that the Holy City remain the country's unified capital. Under the accords, Arabs in East Jerusalem were granted voting rights but the future of the city was left for negotiations at the end of the current interim period.

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00.....Pollstar  
17:30.....Un Pour Tous  
18:00.....Montagne  
18:30.....Les Intropiques  
19:00.....News in French  
19:15.....Ushuaia  
19:30.....McHals Navy  
20:00.....The Album Show  
20:30.....Quantum Leap  
21:10.....Galactica  
21:30.....News in English  
22:30.....  
23:59.....Feature Film: "Foreign Affairs"  
23:59.....The Upper Hand

PRAYER TIMES

05:02.....Fajr  
06:34.....(Sunrise) Dhuhr  
11:32.....Dhuhr  
14:16.....Asr  
16:39.....Maghreb  
18:01.....Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Swaidieh, Tel. 810740  
Assemblies of God Church, Tel.  
637583.  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624390.  
Church of the Annunciation Tel.  
637440.

De in Salla Church Tel. 661757  
Terrence Church Tel. 622366  
Church of the Annunciation Tel.  
623541.  
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel.  
628543.  
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.  
771331.  
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.  
775261.  
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.  
Armenian International Church Tel.  
625256.  
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel:  
624328.  
German-speaking Evangelical Con-  
gregation Tel. 684195  
The Latter Day Saints Tel. 654932  
Church of Nazareth Tel.675891  
The Evangelical Local Church in  
Amman  
Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Depart-  
ment of Meteorology.

There will be a chance of scat-  
tered showers with skies partly  
cloudy and winds westerly mod-  
erate to active. In Agaba, skies will  
be partly cloudy with a chance of  
showers, winds southerly moderate  
and seas choppy.

Min/Maa. temp. .... 3%  
Amman .....

Agaba ..... 14 / 21  
Deserts ..... 2 / 12  
Jordan Valley ..... 8 / 16

USEFUL  
TELEPHONE  
NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:  
Dr. Hisham Kan'an ..... 790286  
Dr. Walid Al Masi ..... 675485  
Dr. Jamal Jbarah ..... 847351  
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad ..... 846070  
Pins pharmacy ..... 661912  
Firdows pharmacy ..... 778336  
Al Azema pharmacy ..... 673056  
Nairookh pharmacy ..... 623672  
Al Salam pharmacy ..... 636730  
Yaacob pharmacy ..... 644945  
Shmckianji pharmacy ..... 637660  
Najroth pharmacy ..... 624672  
Najib pharmacy ..... 847632

IRBID:  
Dr. Ali Shoghrir ..... 246140  
Alquds pharmacy ..... (—)

ZARQA:  
Dr. Rajeh Saqer ..... 901290  
Khalilkh pharmacy ..... 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre ..... 637111  
Civil Defence Department ..... 661111  
Civil Defence Immediate  
Rescue ..... 630341  
Civil Defence Emergency ..... 199  
Rescue Police 192, 621114, 637777  
Fire Brigade ..... 617101  
Blood Bank ..... 775121  
Criminal Police ..... 843402  
Traffic Police ..... 896390  
Public Security Department ..... 630321  
Hotel Complaints ..... 605800  
Price Complaints ..... 661176  
Water and Sewerage  
Complaints ..... 897467  
Amman Municipality  
Complaints ..... 787111  
Telephone Information  
(directory assistance) ..... 121  
Overseas Calls ..... 010230  
Central Amman Telephone  
Repairs ..... 623101  
Abdali Telephone Repairs ..... 661101  
Jordan Television ..... 773111  
Radio Jordan ..... 774111  
Water Authority ..... 680100  
Jordan Electricity Authority  
..... 815615

Electric Power  
Company ..... 636381  
RJ Flight Information ..... 08-533200  
Queen Alia Intl. Airport ..... 08-533200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:  
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32  
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644231/6  
Jabal Amman Maternity 642441/2  
Malhas, J. Amman 643140  
Palestine Shoushanti 664171/4  
Judean, Al-Muhajirin 77101/3  
University Hospital 845485  
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9  
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/7  
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6  
Judean, Al-Muhajirin 77101/3  
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511/26  
Army, Marka 891611/15  
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50  
Amal Hospital 674155  
ZARQA:  
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323  
Zarqa National Hospital (09)983323  
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)900560  
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)999090  
IRBID:  
Princess Basma Hospital (02)272555  
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272725  
Jib Al-Nufus Hospital (02)247100  
AQABA:  
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

644231/6  
642441/2  
642362  
636140  
664171/4  
660313  
845485  
667227/9  
666127/7  
664164/6  
77101/3  
77511/26  
891611/15  
602240/50  
674155  
09)983323  
09)983323  
09)900560  
09)999090  
02)272555  
02)272725  
02)247100  
03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA  
INTERNATIONAL  
AIRPORT

This information is supplied by  
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information  
Department at the Queen Alia In-  
ternational Airport Tel. (08)53300-  
5, where it should always be ver-  
ified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ)  
Flights  
(Terminal 1)  
05:35 ..... Bangkok (RJ)  
07:45 ..... Agaba (RJ)  
08:35 ..... Jeddah (RJ)  
09:00 ..... Damascus (RJ)  
09:00 ..... Larana (RJ)  
09:05 ..... Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
10:15 ..... Beirut (RJ)  
10:15 ..... Doha, Bahrain (RJ)  
10:15 ..... New York, Amsterdam (RJ)  
11:25 ..... Brussels, Paris (RJ)  
12:25 ..... London (RJ)  
13:00 ..... Madrid, Geneva (RJ)  
13:00 ..... Athens (RJ)  
13:00 ..... Paris, Geneva (RJ)  
13:35 ..... Vienna (RJ)  
14:45 ..... Frankfurt (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

12:35 ..... Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)  
14:25 ..... Moscow (SU)  
16:50 ..... Cairo (MS)  
18:50 ..... Beirut (ME)  
22:55 ..... Istanbul (TK)  
01:10 ..... Amsterdam (KL)

HIJAZ RAILWAY  
TRAIN

Dep. Amman ..... 8:00 a.m. every Monday  
Arr. Damascus ..... 5:30 p.m. every Monday  
Dep. Damascus ..... 7:30 a.m. every Sunday  
Arr. Amman ..... 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple ..... 700 / 500  
Banana ..... 680  
Banana (Mukamar) ..... 170 / 100  
Carrot ..... 280/170  
Cauliflower ..... 350 / 300  
Clementine ..... 400 / 300  
Cucumbers (large) ..... 650 / 500  
Eggplant ..... 280 / 160  
Garlic ..... 550 / 400  
Grape Fruit ..... 240 / 140  
Lemon ..... 250 / 180  
Peanut (large) ..... 250 / 200  
Marrow (small) ..... 420 / 300  
Onion (green) ..... 280 / 180  
Onion (dry) ..... 420 / 300  
Orange ..... 540 / 400  
Pepper (hot) ..... 420 / 300  
Pepper (sweet) ..... 420 / 300  
Potato ..... 300 / 200

كندا من اهل







## U.S., N. Korea in touch over downed American helicopter

SEOUL (AFP) — The U.S. army said here it was in contact with North Korea over the fate of two American crewmen of a helicopter which Pyongyang said it shot down Saturday after it strayed across the DMZ from the South.

"We are in touch with North Korea through a variety of channels," an Eighth Army spokesman told AFP, as unconfirmed reports indicated the two American pilots of the OH-58 spotter helicopter were alive.

North Korea claimed through its official news agency that anti-aircraft guns of the Korean People's Army had brought the "enemy" helicopter down with "one shot... as a self-defence measure."

"A helicopter of the enemy illegally flew deep into the air above the Ipbo-Ri area, Kungang County, Kangwon Province, at around 10 hours and 45 minutes (1045 GMT) today," the North's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

The U.S. Eighth Army and the Pentagon in separate announcements here and in Washington confirmed the helicopter had made "an emergency landing" inside North Korea, but not that it had been shot down.

An American OH-58 observation helicopter, piloted by two Americans, on a "routine training" mission crossed the DMZ, and "according to Department of

Defence (DOD) reports, it made an emergency landing," the Eighth Army spokesman told AFP in Seoul.

Radar contact was lost with the crew at around 11:30 a.m. (0230 GMT), he said, without commenting on a Southern radio report that it had gone down at 10:40 a.m. some five kilometres inside North Korean territory.

It was the first known instance in at least 10 years of an American military helicopter straying over the tense and heavily fortified Demilitarized Zone that has divided the two Koreas since the end of the 1950-53 war.

The South's Yonhap News Agency quoted Combined Forces Command (CFC) sources as saying the pilots had become disoriented by heavy snowfall in the area and had mistakenly landed on the Northern instead of Southern side.

The two had tried to take off again when they realised their mistake, but had been "prevented," the sources told Yonhap, adding that the two were uninjured.

In Tokyo, North Korean monitors said KCNA continued to repeat its brief three-paragraph announcement, which ended by saying that "the competent organ is investigating the illegal intrusion of the enemy's helicopter."

Radio Pyongyang monitored in Seoul at 1200 GMT made no mention of the fate

of the pilots in its news of the helicopter's downing, with a protest against combined U.S.-South Korean exercises in the DMZ area.

Yonhap in Seoul said CFC Commander General Gary Luck and his South Korean counterpart General Chang Sung were meeting on how to handle the incident, which came amid an unprecedented warming of ties between the U.S. and North Korea.

The agency also said the United Nations Command (UNC) at the border town of Panmunjom had already contacted North Korea through its emergency channels to ask for the safe return of the crew and the helicopter.

CFC vigilance in the area had been stepped up, it added.

The official CFC spokesman told AFP he was not in a position to confirm the Yonhap reports.

In Washington a Pentagon spokesman confirmed that the OH-58, belonging to the Eighth Army's 17th Aviation Brigade, had made an emergency landing in North Korean territory.

"We lost contact with the helicopter at 21:15 EST (0215 GMT)... we are listing it as an emergency landing," said Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon.

Mr. Bacon too declined comment on the North's report of it being shot down, saying information was "preliminary and partial."

The last major incident of American servicemen falling into North Korean hands was in 1968 when the North captured the spyship Pueblo.

The 83 Pueblo crewmen were held for 11 months before being released. In 1976 two U.S. military men on the DMZ were hacked to death by North Korean border guards when they tried to cut down some trees.

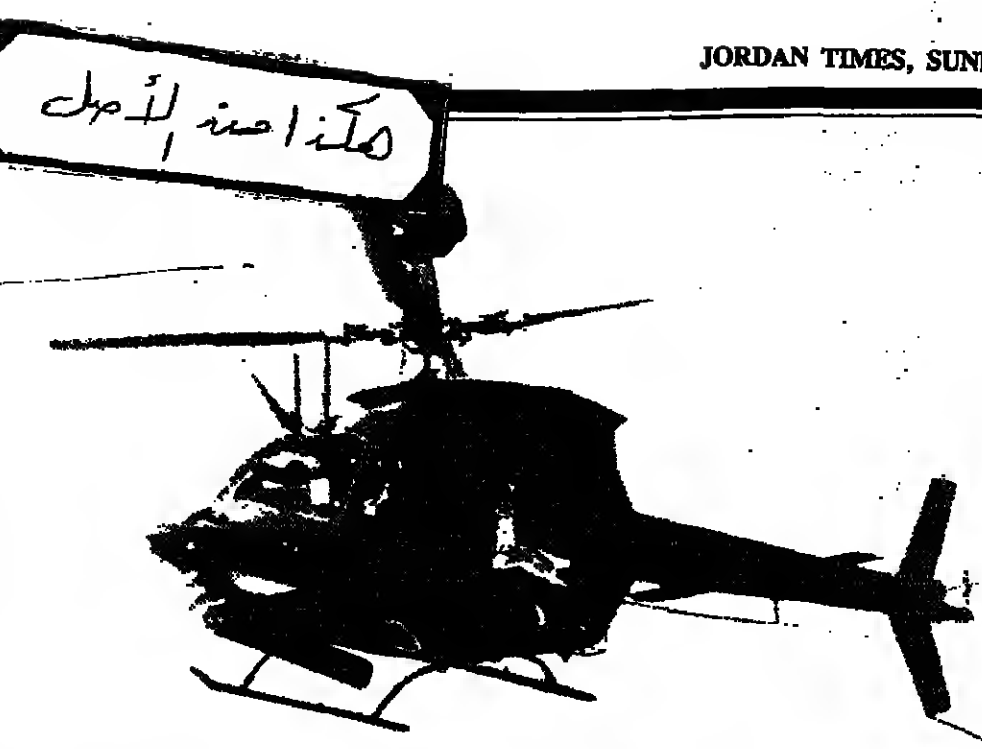
In the past two months there has been an unprecedented warming of relations between Washington and Pyongyang, who despite being technically still at war with one another, are now discussing setting up diplomatic ties.

The first talks on an exchange of liaison offices took place in New York this month, and last weekend two influential U.S. senators flew to Pyongyang for the first time since the 1950-53 conflict.

Meanwhile, a U.S. member of the House of Representatives arrived in North Korea Saturday, the same day as the U.S. military helicopter went down in the Communist republic.

KCNA said Democrat Bill Richardson, a member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and his party were greeted at the airport by officials from the Foreign Affairs Commission.

The report, monitored in London, gave no further details about the purpose of his trip or whom he would meet.



Undated file photo of a U.S. OH-58 helicopter similar to the one which was allegedly shot down by North Korea as it flew across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) Saturday (AFP photo)

## Cambodia says it is reforming military

PHNOM PENH (R) — The Cambodian Defence Ministry, responding to accusations from a leading civil rights campaigner that its army was corrupt and committed atrocities, said Saturday it was already reforming the armed forces.

The Royal Cambodian Armed Forces is doing its best to suppress this problem and for that reason we are undertaking reforms in the whole armed forces," a statement from the Cambodian Ministry of National Defence said.

"(We are) for example cutting back the size of the

armed forces, reducing the ranks of the generals and other officers and undertaking training for all soldiers and officers," the statement added.

The outgoing executive director of the Khmer Institute of Democracy (KID), Julio Jeldres, earlier this week accused the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) of being corrupt and lacking discipline, "often killing and committing atrocities against innocent people."

The Defence Ministry statement criticised Mr. Jeldres, a Chile-born Australian national, for focusing on the

alleged misdeeds of the RCAF rather than those reportedly committed by the country's Maoist guerrillas.

It accused the Khmer Rouge of selling off parts of Cambodia and said that dozens of Thai trucks were moving in and out of Khmer Rouge areas every day along the border, transporting logs, gems and other products.

"Why does Jeldres not point out that the money from logging in the Khmer Rouge areas is used by the Khmer Rouge to buy arms and ammunition to kill Cambodian people," said the statement.

## 3 Thai students die in Pakistan violence

KARACHI (R) — Three Thai Muslim students waiting for a taxi were shot dead Friday in continuing violence in the Pakistani port city of Karachi, police said Saturday.

The three men were among 10 people killed in different areas of the city Friday and early Saturday, raising to 119 the death toll from ethnic and sectarian violence in Karachi this month.

The Thai students of Karachi religious school Jamia Bonoria of the majority Sunni sect, were shot by un-

identified gunmen on motorcycles in Karachi's central district as they were waiting for a taxi after lunch with their friends, the police said.

The dead were identified as Mohammad Younus, Noorudin and Abdul Majid.

Two of their colleagues, Mohammad Shugri and Abdul Ghanai, were wounded and admitted to hospital.

One person was shot dead Saturday morning in Shadman town area. Shots were also reported from central and east districts, police said.

Six other people, including two policemen, were killed Friday.

Police officials said directives had been issued for the arrest of all leaders and activists of two rival sectarian Muslim organisations, the Sunni Sipah-E-Sahaba and the Shiite Tehrik Jafria.

"It is not just the militants of the rival factions of the Mohajir National Movement (MQM) involved in the violence, but also Muslim militants and other groups out to settle scores," a police official said.

## U.K. Conservatives fight back after poll

LONDON (R) — Britain's embattled Conservative government, humiliated by the opposition Labour Party in its worst by-election defeat for 60 years, Saturday launched the long fight needed to woo back deeply disillusioned voters.

Cabinet troubleshooters David Hunt, reacting to the 29 per cent swing to Labour in the central England seat of Dudley West Thursday, said: "We have got to unite behind the reforms of the last 15 years. We now have to begin the fight back."

But Prime Minister John Major has a mountain to climb — his popularity has plummeted in opinion polls and he is battling rebels who are tearing the party apart over Europe.

If the Dudley swing were repeated nationwide at the next general election, due by mid-1997, the Conservatives would be routed.

Former party Chairman Norman Fowler said the Conservatives had "a political death wish" by appearing hopelessly divided.

"If we go on like this, then we will make a gift-wrapped present of the next general election to the Labour Party," he warned after the Conservatives' 29th consecutive by-election defeat.

Bitter recriminations abounded with Conservative right-wingers calling for tax cuts, a referendum on the European Union and tougher law and order measures to attract back voters angered by tax rises, party splits and sleaze allegations.

Rebels, who were expelled from the parliamentary party after voting against the gov-

ernment on an EU finance bill, were unrepentant after the latest election fiasco.

Teresa Gorman said voters were "fed up with handouts to Brussels. Our supporters stayed at home because they think the policies are not in their best interests."

The Conservatives are now pinning their hopes on economic recovery as the key to success at the next general election.

Mr. Major, putting a brave face on the Dudley disaster, Friday urged Conservative rebels to step into line behind him.

Unity will be crucial if the Conservatives are, against all the pollsters' predictions, to pull off a fifth consecutive general election victory against a resurgent Labour Party under Tony Blair.

## S. Korea names new premier

SEOUL (Agencies) — South Korean President Kim Young-Sam named U.S.-educated Lee Hong-Koo as his new prime minister Saturday, a presidential spokesman said.

Mr. Lee, who is deputy prime minister and also the unification minister, replaces Lee Yung-Dug.

"The designation was based on the president's belief that Lee would be best suited to lead the nation's efforts for globalisation, now a top priority of the government in anticipation of the impending birth of the world trade organisation," the spokesman said.

"Lee's wide administrative experience, as well as his moral integrity, was taken into consideration," he said. The National Assembly approved Mr. Kim's choice of prime minister.

A parliamentary spokesman said Mr. Lee's appointment was passed with 177 votes in favour and 34 against.

The shuffle of jobs had been expected, although not until sometime next week.

South Korean analysts and the main opposition Democratic Party said Mr. Kim was named because Mr. Lee trusts his international savvy and expertise on unification issues.

"Lee has been educated abroad, and he has the inter-



South Korean Prime Minister-designate Lee Hong-Koo receives congratulations by telephone at his office in Seoul after being named to the post Saturday (AFP photo)

national sense. That is what the new cabinet needs," said a professor at Seoul National University.

After learning of the announcement, Mr. Lee told reporters he had "never expected this."

"But since a government post is not one you choose, you've no choice but to do your best when you're given the chance to serve the public," Mr. Lee told reporters after his appointment.

Mr. Lee, 60, replaced Lee Yung-Dug, who had limited his role to that of a figurehead premier, carefully avoiding a reputation of his predecessor Lee Hai-Chang's error — not knowing it is the president who calls the shots here.

"I feel heavy burdens on

my shoulder," the premier-designate told journalists after his appointment. "Globalisation is a world trend and we must not be left behind."

On future ties between North and South Korea, he said inter-Korean relations would largely depend on changes in North Korea, rather than South Korea's policy toward the North.

"Our policy of pushing for peaceful unification through dialogue will remain unchanged," he said.

Besides the new prime minister, all eyes are now on the newly instituted finance-economy ministerial post, a powerful double job combining the functions of the finance and the economic planning portfolios.

## Germans rally against far-right Republicans

SINDELFINGEN, Germany (R) — About 2,000 people protested in the southwest German city of Sindelfingen Saturday against a congress of the far-right Republicans Party, one of the country's largest right-wing groups.

Ignatz Bubis, head of Germany's Central Council of Jews, told the protesters that far-right parties should not be allowed to gain popular support.

"We must not give the spiritual arsonists the slightest chance," he said, echoing accusations that far-right groups like the Republicans encourage neo-Nazis through their rhetoric to firebomb refugee hostels.

More than 30 people, many of them foreigners but also including other targets of Nazi ideology like the handicapped and Jews, have been killed since racist violence flared after German unification in 1990.

Groups like the Republicans, who campaign for the deportation of foreigners from Germany, created scapegoats for violent neo-Nazi groups, Mr. Bubis said.

BEIJING (AFP) — Human rights groups moved swiftly Saturday to condemn the heavy sentences handed down to nine Chinese dissidents in the largest political trial here since 1989.

"These people have been jailed solely for the peaceful exercise of their fundamental human rights and we are calling for their immediate and unconditional release," Amnesty International said in a statement.

The Beijing Intermediate People's court announced Friday sentences ranging between three and 20 years for the nine dissidents, who had been held in police detention since being picked up in May and June 1992 in a sweep on underground pro-democracy and labour organisations.

The heaviest sentence was imposed on lecturer Hu Shigen, 38, who received a 20-year term for "counter-revolutionary" crimes.

Among the other dissidents, Doctor Kang Yuchun, 28, was sentenced to 17 years, worker Liu Jingsheng, 38, to 15 years and unemployed individual Wang Guoqi, 31, to 11 years.

"This trial appears to have been grossly unfair," Amnesty said.

"It was closed to family members, the public and foreign observers, and we are urging the authorities to re-

trial procedures."

A total of 15 dissidents were tried and six were released Friday, although Amnesty noted that the charges against them were not dropped and one had been put under supervision for two years.

All defendants were charged with forming or joining three underground dissident groups, writing and printing political leaflets and planning to distribute them before June 4, 1992 — the third anniversary of the Tiananmen massacre.

The New York-based group Human Rights in China, also protested the sentences which it said scuttled the theory that stronger trade ties with China would benefit human rights.

"We strongly protest the sentencing of these dissidents and call on all international organisations to step up pressure on the Chinese government," the group said in a statement.

"In reality, the absence of international pressure has been the human rights situation in China worsen significantly," the statement said with specific reference to U.S. President Bill Clinton's decision in June to delink human rights and the renewal of China's most-favoured-nation (MFN) trade status.

The consequences of Mr. Clinton's decision were also

highlighted by Robin Munro of the U.S.-based Human Rights Watch/Asia.

"Clinton's backdown on MFN gave the green light to Beijing to mop up the dissident community," said Mr. Munro.

"Once he folded, what little pressure there was from others dwindled to nothing. Beijing has realised it has absolutely nothing to lose by dealing with the dissident problem."

The trial of the 15 had been delayed at least twice, apparently for foreign policy considerations, including Beijing's unsuccessful bid to host the 2000 Olympics and its efforts to ensure MFN renewal in the first half of this year.

The heavy sentences handed down to the nine Chinese dissidents this week capped a dismal year for the country's pro-democracy movement, with most leading activists imprisoned or forced into exile.

Police sweeps in Beijing, Shanghai and elsewhere have all but silenced China's dissident voices and a policy shift by most Western governments keen to trade with China has left human rights groups as the only vocal champions of a neutered movement.

"This was the year of the coup-de-grace for the dissident movement in China,"

"There is now almost nobody left at liberty who feels capable of speaking out," Mr. Munro said, while voicing "deep concern" over the future fate of the most prominent exception, Wang Dan.

Mr. Wang, the 1989 student leader, is currently in hiding after escaping constant police surveillance outside his home and receiving alleged death threats.

Following a phoenix-like resurgence at the end of September.

"I don't see the dissident movement recovering from all this for a very long time," said one Western diplomat.

"Those activists that really worry the government are in police custody, jail or exile, while the few who remain free are obviously too frightened to speak out," he added.

"The scramble in Canada, Europe, Japan and the United States to buy into the Chinese economic boom has convinced the authorities in Beijing that they have nothing to lose by flaunting their contempt for human rights," said Human Rights Watch/Asia's Executive Director Sidney Jones.

"Countries engaging in 'commercial diplomacy' with China should express outrage over these sentences," Mr. Jones said after Friday's court announcement.

## Emptyhanded burglar leaves note of protest

HONG KONG (AP) — Having broken into a garment factory and found nothing of value, a disgruntled burglar left a note warning the owner to do better next time, or else. "Put some money here next time or I'll set fire to your factory. ... You make me do this for nothing. I can't even find 10 cents," said the note in Chinese. It was written by Yu Kin-Fung, 33, who was later arrested and admitted to a string of burglaries. At his trial Thursday, he pleaded guilty, saying he needed money for his child and pregnant wife in China and to support a drug habit. The district court jailed him for three years.

## China clamps down on matrimonial agency scams

BEIJING (AFP) — The Chinese government is set to draft regulations aimed at preventing Chinese matrimonial agencies that promise foreign spouses from ripping off hopeful clients, the China Daily reported Saturday. However, a Ministry of Civil Affairs official quoted by the paper was quick to stress that the new rules should not be seen as an attempt to limit the ever-expanding number of marriages between Chinese and foreigners or overseas Chinese. A draft of the proposed regulation has been submitted to the State Council for approval, the official said. In the past five years, 120,000 such marriages have been recorded — 30,000 in 1993 alone — with the vast majority taking place between mainland women and overseas Chinese from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. The trend has been fuelled by a boom in matchmaking agencies, many of which operate without licences and cheat local customers of their money, the official said. In Guangzhou, the capital of thriving southern Guangdong province which borders Hong Kong, some 200 agencies have been closed down in the last few months for pocketing 400-yuan (\$50) registration fees but failing to introduce clients to a potential spouse. In addition, a lack of potential foreign partners has led many unscrupulous agencies to look for local stand-ins who are directed to reject fee-paying clients. Although the women are turned down, they still have to pay the agencies a fee for the privilege. One genuine overseas Chinese from Hong Kong, who signed up with a Guangzhou agency, reported recently that after expressing interest in the third candidate he met, he was pressured by the owner to see and reject 10 more.

## UAE to launch school drive against mixed marriages

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) will send social experts to schools to give lectures and distribute booklets in a campaign against marriage to foreign women, officials said. The campaign is sponsored by the marriage fund, which was created by the government three years ago to encourage UAE nationals to marry local women by offering them grants of up to 70,000 dirhams (\$19,073). "The plan will be implemented from next month and will cover the country's university and all secondary schools," the fund's director general, Jamal Al Bah, told Al Itihad newspaper. "It involves seminars, lectures and distribution of booklets to students containing figures showing the negative effects of marrying foreigners." Mr. Bah cited differing traditions and cultures for the "negative effects" of mixed marriages, most of which involve women from Egypt and India. UAE men have turned to such countries for wives because of soaring dowries for local brides. In some cases, dowries, the money paid by a bridegroom to his bride under Islamic Law, exceed \$100,000. Reacting to calls by President Sheikh Zayed Ibn Sultan Al Nahayan this year, hundreds of UAE tribes agreed to limit wedding costs but they remained far higher than dowries offered to foreign brides. Sheikh Zayed, 69, ordered the establishment of the marriage fund with a capital of 70 million dirhams (\$19 million), which was raised last year to 150 million dirhams (\$40.8 million).

## Danes rue morning after the night before

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — Denmark woke with a massive hangover Saturday, and probably in the wrong bed, after a traditional seasonal carousal that for many will lead to the divorce court.

For Friday was the time of the Julefrokost, the mid-December workplace binge that puts the office party in other lands very much in the shade and means good business for private detectives as well as the catering trade.

The tradition dates back some 60 years, when bosses began to lay on an annual dinner which they shared with their workers. Differentials were forgotten amid the sharing of a few home truths.

"We were never afraid to say what we thought to our superiors on that night. They were as drunk as we were, and accepted mockery and even insults from us," said retired metalworker Niels, 66, who claimed never to have missed a Julefrokost.

"It's like an exorcism, a moment of liberation where you can shout out loud what you have been saying under your breath all year," he said.

perishable ritual, celebrated from the factory to the royal palace, taking in government and parliament, the armed forces and public services as well as private firms.

The whole of Denmark came to a halt Friday as in little groups or vast hordes the country gathered round red-clothed and candle-lit tables to eat vast quantities of food swilled down with copious draughts of beer and spirits.

But as usual one thing leads to another as the nation lets down its collective hair, and the end result is often tears.

"The men are the worst," said psychologist Bent Petersen. "They are the ones who push their female colleagues, married or engaged, to commit acts under the influence of alcohol which they would not probably otherwise have done."

Niels, 27, admitted earlier this week that he was waiting impatiently for this year's Julefrokost. "I hope to score as well as I did in 1993," he said. "The women only need a few drinks to let themselves on"

year-old Inger there is the other side of the coin. "My husband will at his party and I'm afraid he will come home like last year, completely drunk and with lipstick on his collar," she wrote in the letters column of a major newspaper.

"Should I take revenge and do the same with a male colleague, or should I break with him, because I can't forgive him any more," she wondered.

Suspicious wives, and some husbands, will have hired private detectives beforehand to see if their spouses behave themselves, but for the rest, in Mr. Petersen's opinion, post-Julefrokost confessions and expressions of regret should never be made.

"The result is more often than not disputes, bitterness and eventual separation," he said.

Inger floated the idea of husbands and wives going to the same party, but when she broached it to her husband's employers the suggestion was given a swift thumbs down. "It would be like taking communion," she was told. "No harm, and no sur-







## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation  
Established 1975  
مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:

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Director General:

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University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

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Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.  
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the  
Jordan Times advertising department.

## Separation map on wall

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Yitzhak Rabin seems to be coming up with a new formula for solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this time on the basis of separating the two peoples according to demography rather than geography. This scheme not only runs counter to the opposition parties' platform but also injects a novel element in the vision and programme of Rabin's own Labour Party.

The Likud Party, which leads Israel's opposition, has always espoused a position that called for annexing all what they described as Eretz Israel. "Judea and Samaria" have always been referred to as part and parcel of Greater Israel and this has fuelled Arab suspicion that the occupied territories are being targeted for annexation. Now the prime minister seems to be giving currency to the proposition that Israel's long-term interests vis-a-vis the occupied territories and their people lie in separation of Jewish population centres from Palestinian ones and then drawing a new boundary line.

What Rabin is not spelling out in clear terms though is the implication of this formula on the Israeli Arabs who constitute no less than one fifth of Israel's population and settle in a geographic area that is sizeable and important. The Israeli Arabs have shown time and again that they feel first and foremost as Palestinians. Based on this, it makes sense to articulate a long-term solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that includes those Arabs as well.

Israel would continue to treat its Arab citizens as thorns in its side till a permanent solution is found for all Palestinians. But incorporation of the Israeli Arabs into any new grand scheme would face immense legal and political hurdles. Since the non-Jewish citizens of Israel enjoy legal protection, no solution that includes them could see the light of day without their consent.

Redrawing the map of Palestine along racial and ethnic bases would also entail some kind of ethnic cleansing even though it is being contemplated for implementation by non-military means. Should that be what Israel is considering as a permanent solution, then an Israeli-Palestinian conference needs to be convened for this purpose so that any redrawing of the map would have to be done through democratic means and agreement of all parties concerned.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily Saturday commented on the reported failure by a committee meeting in Tunis to discuss disarmament and regional security matters in the Middle East, blaming Israel for adamantly refusing to budge from its stand. Mahmoud Rimawi said that the Israelis aim only at economic and political cooperation with the Arab states of the region and are not concerned about discussing ways to reduce its own arsenals of mass destruction weapons. If this trend continues, it will adversely affect the whole peace process in its bilateral and multilateral aspects and tender normalisation a futile attempt, said the writer. It is, he said, unimaginable to see Israel continuing to arm itself with all kinds of weapons and at the same time reaching peace with its neighbours. He said the whole world realises that the Israelis possess mass destruction weapons, including nuclear heads, which are a permanent threat to peace. While the Arabs are holding on to peace and coexistence, the Israelis continue to pursue a hostile attitude not only by massing weapons but also by pursuing their repressive policies, thus laying real obstacles in the path of peace.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour daily criticised the draft budget for 1995 for being void of any mention of pay increases to government employees who are considered as living on the poverty line. Taher Adwan said the rising cost of living in Jordan has prompted the Lower House of Parliament to assign a special session to discuss the situation and look into ways of helping the needy. The basic commodities are out of reach of the limited-income groups whose income is being drained and eroded due to the lower value of the dinar, the soaring prices of all basic commodities, including food, and the growing requirements of the daily life in Jordan, said the writer. He said that the wages and salaries ought to be connected with the cost of living index which means the government ought to find a way to deal with the situation by giving cost of living allowances to the employees who, are in real need of help. The writer said that the government ought to give due attention to tourism and agriculture, as these two sectors can absorb huge numbers of unemployed people and so help reduce poverty.

## Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

## Preparing RJ for privatisation

The Royal Jordanian airline (RJ), was established in 1963 as a private sector shareholding company with a paid-up capital of JD 1 million. Four years later, the Jordanian government found itself, forced to nationalise the ailing company and bring it to the public sector to protect the airline from bankruptcy. The occupation of Jerusalem in June 1967 was a devastating blow to the young company, and the loss of business to and from Jerusalem almost led the company to suspend operations altogether. The conversion of the RJ to a public sector entity was not therefore a matter of choice. Now that the reasons for nationalisation are no more valid, it is only normal to denationalise the corporation and bring it back to where it belongs — the private sector.

The RJ was successful all along in functioning as a national air carrier, especially during difficult times in the early seventies or during the Gulf crisis. In both cases the airline kept Jordan in touch with the world when foreign airlines suspended their operations. However, it was never a financial success. Even when it was posting profits in its accounts, between 1973 and 1983, the airline was heavily dependent on direct or indirect subsidies and sweeping exemptions, the absence of which could have reversed this financial success.

Beside the style of management which was given no reason to give due priority to direct profitability, two other factors were responsible for the company's lack of financial success, namely the huge route network and the structure and turnover of the fleet.

The airline's network was at one time the lengthiest of all Arab airlines. The RJ was among the first Arab airlines to fly to the Far East and America. The long-haul routes to Houston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, Bangkok, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur were too expensive to operate, and the yield on those routes was extremely low due to fierce competition. The airline incurred huge losses to operate long-haul routes which were not particularly serving the best interests of the Jordanian economy or Jordanian travelling public. The airline could have made handsome profits had it concentrated its efforts on a

regional network covering the capitals of the Middle East and Europe.

The airline's fleet was composed of jumbo jets and other wide-body aircraft, which do not fit the thin traffic served by the airline to and from Amman. The airline could have done much better with smaller and less expensive aircraft, which can fly more frequently. It is Jordan's interest to connect Amman with other major capitals by daily flights rather than by two or three flights a week, even if the number of seats offered per week is the same. The airline also changed and modernised its fleet too rapidly, which is obviously very costly.

If invited to take part in the airline's capital, the private sector may decline as long as the airline's balance sheet carries a relatively large deficit due to accumulated losses incurred in previous years (losses that were fully accounted for in the balance sheet or not). The present, accumulated deficit is reportedly in the order of JD 150 million.

This deficit should not be an insurmountable obstacle in the face of privatisation. The solution I recommend is that the government recognise the losses as a public debt in compliance with the provisions of the law which stipulates that the government cover these losses in cash, year after year, immediately upon the issuance of the certified annual accounts. Admittedly, the treasury is not in a position to cover this huge amount. Therefore, it may be enough to make it an acceptable debt on the treasury and consequently a legitimate asset in the balance sheet of the airline. This debt is not to be paid in cash now or in the future. Instead it will be applied against future taxes, fees, rents, etc., which will become due on the privatised company. The amount may take several years to be cleared. This solution is not costly to the government because the airline was fully exempt from these charges in the first place. The private sector may accept this situation because the privatised airline will not, of course, be exempted from taxes, fees and other charges such as landing, mooring and overflying, let alone sales tax and rents of offices and catering and maintenance facilities at the airport, all owned by the government and used by the corporation free of charge.



## Clinton takes step back from political graveyard

By Steve Holland  
Reuter

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton took a step out of the political graveyard on Thursday night by trying to recast his presidency as champion of the middle class.

Virtually written off as a political force because of the Republican seizure of Congress, and getting little help from his own Democrats, Mr. Clinton began his latest and most crucial comeback with a folksy-sounding Oval Office speech.

He belted his way into the tax-cut debate engulfing Washington by proposing one of his own, a middle-class "bill of rights" for millions who are "hurting, frustrated, disappointed, even angry."

He would pay for the five-year, \$60 billion plan with deep cuts in the serpentine government bureaucracy.

In so doing, Mr. Clinton continued an inexorable tilt to the right in response to the interpretation that the Republicans' romp in Nov. 8

elections was at least in part due to voters' impression that he had strayed too far liberal.

Mr. Clinton boosters saw the speech as returning him to the middle-class roots he championed in his successful 1992 presidential campaign, a 10 minute speech "from the heart" that showed vision and convictions, something his critics say he lacks.

At From, president of the Democratic Leadership Council, a centrist organisation of which Mr. Clinton was a founder, has spent much of the past two years criticising Mr. Clinton for straying off course.

Thursday night Mr. From was excited by what he heard. "I thought it was terrific," he said. "He began a conversation with middle-class voters... secondly, he talked of the values that really hold this country together, the values of citizenship and community. I think this speech gets him back to the roots of values and ideas that Bill Clinton ran for president on."

Republicans who have taken control of the debate over America's future sounded cocky after hearing the speech, convinced their victory had prodded Mr. Clinton towards their side.

"I thought he was going to end the speech by declaring he was going to switch parties and become a Republican," said William Kristol, a Republican idea-man who was Vice President Dan Quayle's chief of staff.

"Welcome aboard," said new Sen. Fred Thompson, Republican from Tennessee. But others saw Mr. Clinton laying out an agenda different from the Republicans.

Centrist Democratic strategist Will Marshall said Mr. Clinton laid bare a basic fault line "with the president and the Democrats stressing aid for the embattled middle class and Republicans stressing the theme of cutting government."

"The president has an affirmative theme and Republicans have essentially a negative one — although a potent one," he said.

There were no illusions at the White House about how far Mr. Clinton has to go to recapture the confidence of the American people.

His public approval rating, according to a New York Times/CBS News poll released this week, is at 38 per cent, lowest of any president since Ronald Reagan's 41 per cent approval in late 1982 in the midst of recession.

Mr. Reagan rebounded and won reelection in 1984. Mr. Clinton's free fall is deeply troubling to his backers because it comes even as the economy is performing well.

With surging Republicans on one side and facing a possible Democratic challenge to his re-nomination in 1996 on the other, Mr. Clinton may have made a nod to his predicament when he remarked that his ultimate goal is not to move left or right but "to do what I think is right."

"My rule for the next two years will be: country first and politics as usual dead last."

## LETTERS

### Misspent energies

To the Editor,

Your newspaper published a letter by Dr. Munther Siyam, (Thornay issue for the subcontinent, Dec. 6, 1994), which is written in the usual propagandistic style of Pakistan. This style is misrepresenting facts, using quotations in a selective fashion so as to create wrong impressions and hiding Pakistan's own involvement in creating trouble and disturbances in the sub-continent. I am saying this because Dr. Siyam is not the only person "who follows developments in the subcontinent"; there are others, like me, who follow developments not only in the Indian subcontinent, but in the world as whole.

I am making these remarks because I am aware of the fact that the Indian foreign secretary had invited Pakistan to discuss all issues and this, obviously, implies that India is more than willing to discuss the question of Kashmir also. (Even BBC broadcasts had confirmed this). After all, what is at stake is the future of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, and this territory needs to be returned to India. As you might well know, Pakistan invaded the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir in 1948 and has been in illegal occupation since then.

of its territory.

India has consistently sought a dialogue with Pakistan. However, Pakistan has chosen to fight talks with India. As has been shown by the war policies laid down by His Majesty King Hussein, it is better to discuss and negotiate to reach agreement and bring forth peace.

In my opinion, it is high time that all the countries in the subcontinent spent their energies fighting their real enemies which are poverty, illiteracy, disease, social backwardness, etc.

Yousaf Shahin,  
P.O. Box 31022,  
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

## Palestinian refugees — who's to blame?

By Pascal B. Karny

IN HIS recently published book "The New Middle East", Shimon Peres alleges, among other matters, that some of the Arabs of Palestine left their homeland in 1948 because the Arab leaders of the neighbouring countries called up them to leave the war zones with the baseless hope that they will return after the Arab states win the war. Consequently, Mr. Peres argues the Arab leaders are responsible for creating the refugee problem and for keeping it alive as the Arab states refused to absorb them like Israel absorbed the Jewish refugees who fled from the Arab countries.

Mr. Peres further says that the Arabs who fled from Palestine counted about 600,000 and Israel absorbed the same number of Jewish refugees who were expelled from the Arab countries.

It should be observed at the outset that Mr. Peres uses the word "fled" from Palestine when referring to the Palestine refugees while he uses the word "expelled" in referring to the Jewish refugees who fled the Arab countries in 1948 and thereafter.

Let us however examine Mr. Peres' allegations more deeply in order to record here the true historical facts which are corroborated by eminent authors, including Jewish authors.

On the allegations that the Arab leaders called upon the Arabs of Palestine to leave the war zones in Palestine, I will quote at the outset author David Hirst in his book "The Gun and The Olive Branch" in which he says the following: "The Zionist version of the Palestinian exodus is a myth manufactured after the cataclysm took place. If the Zionists could show that the refugees had really fled without cause, at the express instructions of their own politicians, they would greatly erode the world's sympathy for their plight and, in consequence, the pressure on themselves to allow them to return. Thus in public speeches and such scholarly-looking pamphlets they peddled this myth the world over. It was not until 1959 that the Palestinian scholar, Walid Khalidi, exposed it for what it is. His painstaking researches were independently corroborated by an Irish scholar, Erskine Childers, two years later. Together they demonstrated that the myth was not just a gross misrepresentation of accepted or even plausible facts; the very 'facts' themselves had been invented. Orders for the evacuation of the civilian population had not been simply issued, the Zionists said, they had been broadcast over Arab radio stations. One had come from the mufti himself. Yet when these two scholars took the trouble to examine the record — to go through the specially opened archives of Arab governments, contemporary Arabic newspapers and the radio monitoring reports of both the BBC and the CIA — they found no such orders had been issued, let alone broadcast, and that when challenged to produce chapter-and-verse evidence, the date and origin of just one such order, the Zionists with all the apparatus of the state of Israel now at their disposal, were quite unable to do so."

In describing how the Jewish Haganah and Palmach troops occupied Arab villages in 1948, the Jewish historian Arie Yitzhaki wrote the following: "... the method adopted being to raid an enemy village and blow up as many houses as possible in it. In the course of these operations many old people, women and children, were killed wherever there was resistance."

Yitzhak Rabin, the present prime minister of Israel, has recorded in his Diary that at the instructions of Ben Gurion himself, the Israeli army physically expelled in 1948 all the inhabitants of Ramleah and Lydda from their homes. The sick, the old, women and children had to travel all the way to Ramallah, in the West Bank, and hundreds of them died on the way from exhaustion, hunger or thirst. This expulsion, among many others including massacres portray the black history of the creation of the state of Israel.

And now, without remorse or expression of human feeling towards the tragedy of the Palestinian refugees, Shimon Peres, who poses as the man of the peace and of self-righteousness, alleges in his book that Israel did not expel the Palestinians from their ancestral homeland and is not therefore responsible for the refugee problem. But, documentary evidence and statements of knowledgeable leaders and politicians prove the contrary. Even Jewish and Israeli leaders admit their responsibility for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem. It is thus appropriate to paraphrase Prophet Ezechiel's cry to the "house of Israel" and address it to Shimon Peres and his compatriots as follows: "Every one of you shall be judged by the Lord according to his ways and acts."

by causing panic among the Palestinian population" so as to evacuate them from Palestine and replace them with Jews from all over the world. Herzl himself, the father of Zionism, was the first who proposed in his diaries that the problem of the Arabs in Palestine be solved by their physical removal from their homeland. This removal was implicit in the whole concept of a Jewish state in Palestine. Weizman, the first president of Israel, is known for his off-quoted statement: "Palestine shall be as Jewish as England is English." Indeed how can Palestine be totally Jewish without expelling the Palestinians or, to quote a more diplomatic term used by some Jewish leaders, by "transferring" them outside their country.

Joseph Weitz, who was responsible for Jewish colonisation, wrote in his diary as early as 1940: "There is no other way than to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries, to transfer all of them; not one village, not one tribe, should be left... only after this transfer will the country be able to absorb the millions of our own brethren. There is no other way out." His views were shared not merely by the fanatic revisionists headed by Jabotinsky, Ben-Gurion's spiritual father, but by the mainstream socialist leadership headed by Ben Gurion. The Jewish "Plan Dalet", which was approved by the Zionist executive, was intended to control the areas given to the Jews by the United Nations partition plan in addition to areas occupied by the Jews which were outside these borders. The Plan was also designed to cleanse such areas of their Arab inhabitants, especially the towns and villages abutting on the roads essential for Jewish communications. The plan also entails the destruction and the evacuation of some twenty villages, like that of Deir Yassin where the massacre of its civilians took place on April 9, 1948, to protect the peaceful Palestinian civilian population from further massacres. Did not the Israeli army completely destroy the towns of Lydda and Beit Nuzla villages and scattered its inhabitants to the four winds when it occupied the West Bank in 1967?

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With regard to the alleged call of the grand mufti of Palestine (the late Haj Amin Al Hussein), it is incontrovertible now that he was so alarmed at the exodus that he sent a cable to one of his staff as follows: "The emigration of children and others from Palestine to Syria is detrimental to our interest. Contact the proper authorities in Damascus and Beirut to prevent it."

All the above is sufficient to rebut the allegations of Shimon Peres. Let us however review cursorily the Zionist policy and the statements of some of the Zionist and Jewish leaders themselves on the question of the evacuation of the Palestinian Arabs.

Some of the Jewish and Zionist leaders are honest and frank. They therefore explicitly admit that the Palestinians were expelled either by force or threat or



# Features

## 'Crime of the century' still a mystery 60 years on

By David Ljunggren  
Reuter

ST. PETERSBURG — Sixty years after the momentous murder of Leningrad Communist Party boss Sergei Kirov, historians are still arguing over who was behind what one leading academician calls the "crime of the century."

Amidst the mist of claims, counter-claims and conspiracy theories which swirl around this turning point in history, just two facts are indisputable.

At 4.37 p.m. on December 1, 1934, as Kirov was walking down a murky corridor towards his office in Leningrad's Smolny building, he was shot in the back of the head by 30-year-old Leonid Nikolayev.

That same night Soviet Dictator Josef Stalin issued a decree stepping up trials and executions of those considered hostile to the government. Countless millions of people were shot and imprisoned.

Some historians are convinced that the highly paranoid Stalin, alarmed by Kirov's growing popularity within the party, decided to have him killed before he could become a potential rival for power.

One such expert is Dr. Robert Conquest, a Stalinologist who has taken a close interest in Kirov, who was 48 when he died.

"Nothing I've seen has changed my view that Stalin was directly responsible for Kirov's death," he said. He added that there is overwhelming circumstantial evidence Stalin was to blame.

"On one level it was word of mouth only," said Dr. Conquest in a telephone interview from Stanford University in California.

"It's like Hitler and the Holocaust against the Jews — some people say Hitler knew nothing about it because there are no documents signed by him. But a court of law is not the same as a court of history."

Stalin's smouldering suspicions of the charismatic Kirov seem to have been confirmed in early 1934 during the 17th Communist Party congress, when elections to the policy-making central committee

showed Kirov's star shone brightest of all.

Contemporary accounts relate that of the 1,966 delegates, only a handful voted against Kirov, compared to almost 300 against Stalin. Worse for Stalin, there were tentative suggestions he should be replaced by Kirov.

Of the delegates present, 1,108 were shot over the next five years before the 18th party congress in 1939.

Many of those executed have been posthumously pardoned and the State Commission for the Rehabilitation of the Repressed is ploughing through the countless documents on the Kirov case.

"There are no new conclusions to be drawn. Unfortunately nothing has come up. I think Stalin was too cunning to leave any direct traces," said commission official Yuri Shigachov, in charge of the Kirov file.

"If you look at this case using the logic which prevailed at the time — 'who benefitted from this?' — then Stalin benefitted most of all."

Dr. Conquest believes Stalin made it known to the dreaded NKVD secret police that he wanted Kirov dead.

Leningrad NKVD officers, looking through their files for possible assassins, came across Nikolayev, who had a string of grievances against Kirov after being expelled from the party and sacked from his job in April 1934.

But this version is dismissed by retired Communist Party historian Anna Kirilina, who has spent 30 years studying the Kirov case.

She says she was given access to material which no one else has seen, including the original investigation into Nikolayev carried out immediately after the assassination.

"I personally am convinced that Nikolayev carried out the killing alone," she said in an interview. "Conquest did not work in the archives. I did."

She said that by carefully sifting through the material, as well as talking to people who had known Nikolayev, she was able to build up a portrait of a sickly, twisted man who was determined to wreak revenge for the wrongs he felt he had suffered.

"Nikolayev was a very vengeful, up-tight person,

who saw injustices everywhere. He thought Kirov personified evil," said Kirilina, who — unlike Dr. Conquest — believes Nikolayev's wife had at one stage had an affair with Kirov.

Nikolayev's diary showed he began plotting to kill Kirov in August 1934 — "someone has to be shot to shake up the party" — and he wrote to his mother saying he would soon be dead because he wanted to commit an act to ensure his name lived forever.

Those who opposed this theory say Nikolayev's feelings were well known and all the NKVD had to do was to point him at Kirov.

"But Stalin would not have been Stalin had he not taken advantage of this," conceded Ms. Kirilina.

The dictator, chafing at the resistance from colleagues on the ruling politburo, acted with lightning speed. First he used the murder to purge Kirov's allies in Leningrad, long seen as a possible centre of resistance to Moscow's rule.

Then, over the next years, the murder became a handy tool to help him decapitate Soviet society, killing off political, cultural and military leaders as well as countless innocent people. Those not shot immediately found themselves in labour camps.

Although the debate continues, Ms. Kirilina does seem to have cleared up one mystery — what happened immediately after the murder and why some accounts spoke of a second shot. She says the original investigation shows Nikolayev wanted to commit suicide.

After firing once at Kirov he put the gun to his chest and was about to pull the trigger when a nearby workman threw one of his tools at him, hitting him in the face and knocking him to the ground. The bullet intended for Nikolayev's heart burrowed harmlessly into the plasterwork instead.

But this is small change compared to one of the main enigmas continuing to bedevil the world's Sovietologists.

"If I had the chance to solve just one mystery of the Soviet era, I think it would be to clear up the Kirov case once and for all," said Dr. Conquest.

## Caucasian powder keg major stake in Kremlin policy

By Paola Messina

Agence France Presse  
MOSCOW — The Caucasus, a corridor from East to West and divided between Islam and Christianity, has always been a powder keg, where myriad ethnic groups are again at war and the stakes for Russian policy are high.

The push by Russian troops into Chechnya, the tiny Muslim republic asserting its independence of Moscow, marks a further escalation of the past two years of more or less disguised intervention, with Russian troops stationed as peacekeepers in Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia.

In addition to the need to restore a secessionist province to the bosom of the Russian Federation, the Chechnya operation shows Moscow's determination to keep a grip on an oil-rich strategic zone lying between the Caspian and Black seas where hundreds of thousands of Russians live.

Since the Soviet Union fell apart at the end of 1991, the Caucasus has been torn by ethnic conflict, due to arbitrary border demarcations in Stalin's time or to successive waves of colonisation.

President Boris Yeltsin's nationalities adviser Emil Pain noted that "in a region which was already a tinderbox, new autonomous powers have risen up and blown the embers into flame."

As far back as 1988, there was already war over Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian-peopled enclave in Azerbaijan.

Further explosions have followed, weighty with the

consequences of flows of refugees and the difficulty, if not impossibility, of further cohabitation by Christian and Muslim communities.

South Ossetia with its Orthodox population, traditional allies of the Russians, wants to join North Ossetia in Russia.

Separatist Abkhazia, after two years defying Georgian rule, is still unbowed. The 40,000 Muslim Ingush chased out of the suburbs of Vladikavkaz, the North Ossetian capital, in 1992, have still not returned home, and Orthodox followers have taken over many of their houses.

Russia was very quick to make it clear, that even though the empire had crumbled, it still had its word to say and meant to hold on to its sphere of influence.

Keen to maintain a democratic image for the new regime here, the authorities acted circumspectly within Russia's own borders. The Chechnya operation is the first example of a tougher approach.

Explaining Russian intervention outside its borders, Mr. Pain said that Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan were members of the Commonwealth of Independent States who used Russian weaponry and wanted more.

Moreover, those conflicts had a direct effect on Russia. Nobody, apart from Russia, would or could take part in a peace force, Mr. Pain said.

A western diplomacy cast doubt on the capacity of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe to send a buffer force to Nagorno-Karabakh, as decided in principle at its Budapest summit last week.

There was implicit western endorsement of Russian intervention, he said, since the West had little stomach for having to admit yet again its powerlessness to settle conflicts of the post-communist era.

A Russian expert on internal policy forecast that none of the conflicts, the Chechnya rebellion included, had any chance of being properly settled next year.

There would be a "bumpy" process of pacification, bit by bit, and it remained to be seen what the repercussions would be on the 1995 general election and the 1996 presidential race, he said.

"Let us hope Russia escapes a real regional war," he added.

## Cutting cholesterol can save lives, too

By Gina Kolata

NEW YORK — For the first time, a study has found that lowering cholesterol not only reduces the risk of heart attack but also saves lives.

Until now, large studies of cholesterol-lowering drugs have shown that it can reduce deaths from heart attacks but not the overall death rate.

People who lowered their cholesterol levels with drugs died at higher rates of other causes, like cancer or violence or suicide. The connection was a mystery, but the numbers sparked a bitter debate over whether cholesterol lowering was worthwhile.

A new study in Scandinavia, scientists say, emphatically answers that question. The study involved 4,444 men and women aged 35 to 70 with heart disease who had moderate to high cholesterol levels.

Half took a potent cholesterol-lowering drug, simvastatin, that cut their cholesterol levels by an average 35 per cent. The others

By Jean Chabrier

This is the name of a remarkable exhibition in the very beautiful Maritime Museum in the Palais de Chaillot in Paris. Its tremendous success is justified by the richness of the collection.

For centuries, the sea was the only means of transport for passengers and goods from one continent to another. Around the middle of the 18th century, with the increase in the needs for communication, the English government, soon followed by the French (order of 1763), gave subsidies to the fastest ships to carry mail: hence the name of "packet-boat" which is the origin of the French word for "liner": "paquebot".

Their modest size quickly grew with the increase in intercontinental trade and the flux of people, to reach their heyday between the end of the 19th century and 1950-60. Moreover, between these dates, the huge colonial empires necessitated considerable maritime traffic.

It was at this time that the legendary liners appeared, with each company striving to combine speed and safety together with comfort first of all, and then, unheard of luxury, thus creating a certain life-style, which is no more today, and corresponded to commercial requirements. On these liners, even the most underprivileged class, that of immigrants, was accommodated in more humane conditions.

The exhibition begins with a splendid collection of posters from the period, most of which are little masterpieces signed by famous artists and are all invitations to travel (P. Colin, Amvigne, Cassandre, and then Sebille, Brenet, Marin-Marie, Bayle and Taboureaux better known by the pseudonym Sandy Hook who died from lead poisoning from having sucked his pencils too much).

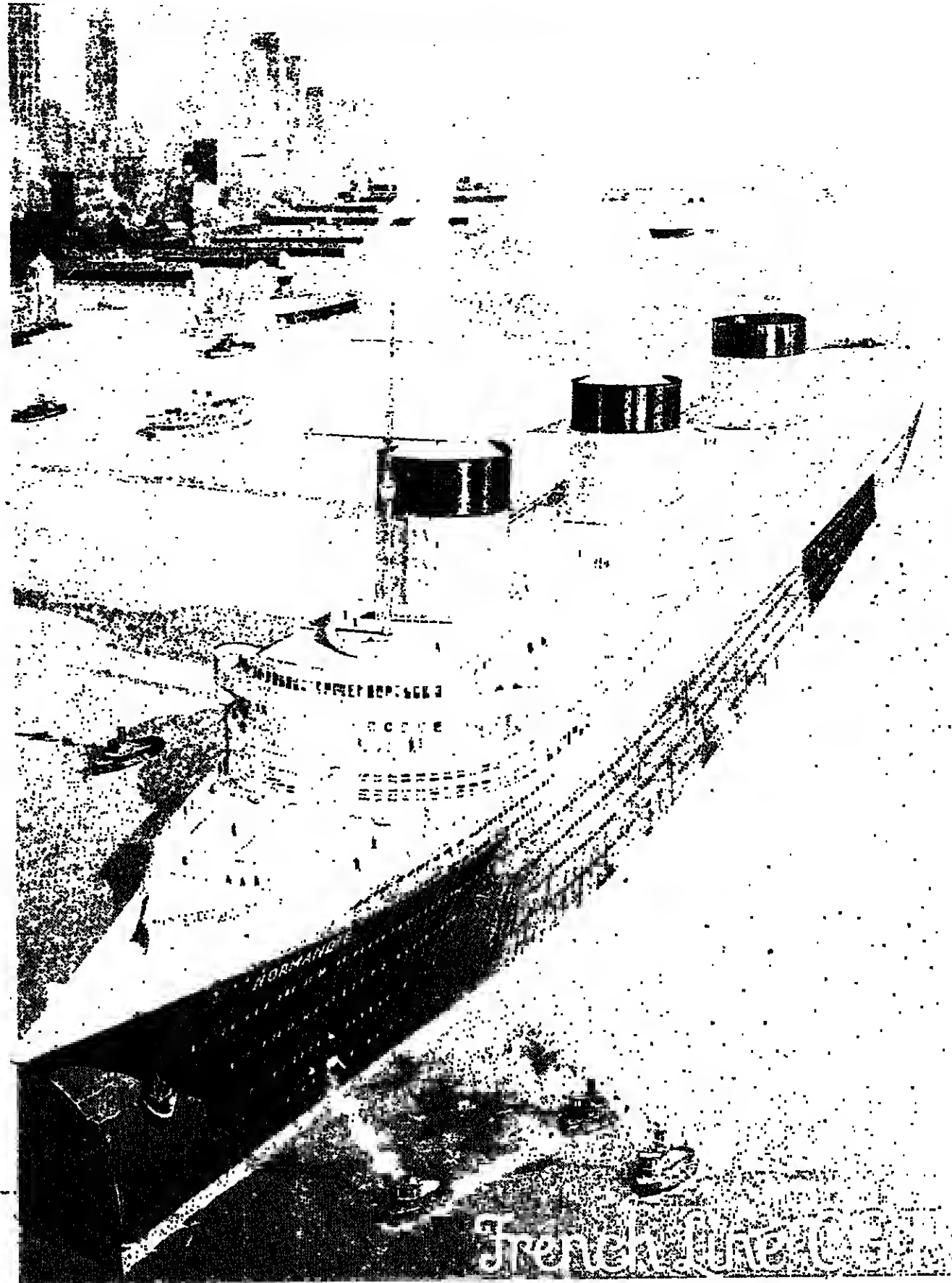
Documents from the period and several video shows retrace the terrific development in naval architecture and construction, the progress of various technologies culminating, each time, in the creation of a more efficient, safer and more stable liner, better suited to the clientele it would have to carry and to the line it was intended for.

Ships intended for the North Atlantic and those which were to ply the Far Eastern routes were not built or fitted out in the same way. The needs and essential features would obviously not be the same, nor would the length of the crossing and the climatic conditions.

But the layman was naturally far more concerned with what would affect him directly, that is to say the escalating refinement and God knows that French as well as foreign companies did not stint on that.

Thousands upon thousands of documents, photographs and original drawings exist, covering the period from 1880 to 1960 giving a very accurate idea of the evolution of the notion of luxury and taste, even in the menus proposed or in the gastronomic refinement offered on French boats at least.

Even more revealing are the life-size replicas of apartments, cabins and lounges with the original furniture and dummies wearing costumes of the period. The liners called the "Paris," the



Poster of the General Transatlantic Company created at the launching of the liner Normandie

"le de France," the "Normandie" and the "France" were the pride of the merchant fleet and ambassadors of France, but there were also other ships which were less prestigious but just as remarkable: the "Marseillaise," the "Felix Roussel," the "La Bourdonnais," "Pasteur," "De Grasse," etc.

Great artists designed the interiors. On the "Normandie," the furniture was by Ruhlman, the light-fittings by Lalique, the low reliefs by Janniot a student of Bourdelle's, the lacquerwork by Dunand, the ironwork by Subes, and the goldware designed by Lalique and made by Christofle. Subes also worked on the "France," together with Leleu, Champlain, Darbois, Lurcat, Ingrand, Old, Picart-Ledoux and Prou.

The care taken to create an appropriate setting was carried to the extent of designing a special interior for each liner, according to the line it was to ply, so that it evoked the culture and civilisation of the country of destination (Egypt, Greece, the Middle

or Far East, Latin America, etc.).

The idea of cruising for pleasure only really developed between 1920 and 1940. Before that, only unrepentant travellers or people who were ill (for the benefit of the sea air) went on cruises for their own sake. The famous P & O (Peninsular and Oriental) appears to have paved the way for leisure cruising from 1885.

Today, these legendary liners

unable to compete commercially with air travel, have disappeared, apart from the "Queen Elizabeth II" which survives thanks to subsidies and the "France" which has become the "Norway".

Their successors, however attractive they may be, will never recreate the art of living of the legendary liners, as they have been designed and built for mass tourism.

An amusing anecdote concerns the promenade-deck of

the "France." On this deck, there were two New York fire hydrants, facing two Parisian gas lamp-posts, but this was not at all a piece of fantasy by the ship's interior designer. The idea was to stop American and French dogs from feeling perturbed when needing to relieve nature. So, as can be seen, enormous attention was paid to detail in those days.

L'actualite en France.

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International Herald Tribune.



## Rich states to be more generous to poor debtors

PARIS (R) — The 18 rich creditor nations of the Paris Club agreed Friday to offer more generous debt relief to very poor countries to help jolt them out of a poverty trap.

Christian Nover, the French treasury head who chairs the club, said some countries would now be able to have 67 per cent of their debts written off, up from 50 per cent.

Some may also get relief on all their debts, not just those payments falling due in a one- or three-year period. This is a highly significant move for the club, which previously granted such deals only to richer special cases like Poland and Egypt.

Mr. Nover told reporters the new measures, collectively known as Trinidad terms after the 1990 conference at which they were first proposed by British Prime Minister John Major, were "a new and important step in the strategy of debt treatment for the poorest and most indebted countries."

"What we want is that these countries can take off as soon as possible," he said, stressing the club wanted to end the dreary cycle of debt, poverty and default that has trapped large parts of Africa and some Latin American and Asian countries.

All members of the club agreed on the move which is in line with a resolution passed by the Group of Seven leading economic powers at their last summit in Naples in July.

Club sources have said some countries, notably France and Britain which have spent years nagging at

more reluctant partners like the United States, still want a few countries to be able to get as much as 80 per cent of debt written off.

Critics say Paris and London are using the debt issue to sustain neo-colonial links with their former African empires.

Trinidad terms will give a poor country with a strong track record of meeting commitments under previous deals with the Paris Club and the International Monetary Fund the chance to strike a once-and-for-all rescheduling of all of its debts.

Mr. Nover underlined that such "exit reschedulings" will remain relatively rare since any failure to service debt under such a pact would destroy the borrower's credibility and deny it access to funds for years to come, he said.

Such deals do not mean extra generosity on the part of the creditors — in fact they may be tougher than standard accords — but will be a vote of confidence that will let countries win better terms on new debts from banks and other creditors.

Mr. Nover said a small number of countries may be awarded once-and-for-all deals in the next few months. He declined to name them, but other sources close to the club have said recently that Uganda, Bolivia and Nicaragua might be among the first.

In total, about 60 countries are poor enough — with annual income per head less than \$695 — to qualify, and of these some 27 have debts that have had to be rescheduled in the Paris Club.

## EU heads into '95 with economic engine reviving

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Union (EU) is heading into the second half of the decade with its economic engine firing on all cylinders and creation of a single currency seriously in prospect.

"The nature of the present recovery process ... which was driven initially by exports and subsequently by a strong rebound in investment, bodes well for the achievement of the main medium-term targets in terms of growth and employment," the European Commission said in its annual economic report.

It predicted that economic growth would average a comfortable three to 3.5 per cent between now and the end of the century after shrinking by 0.3 per cent last year.

One commission official said at the EU's summit in Essen at the weekend that the average would be 3.4 per cent.

Governments are beginning to make headway in the battle to get their finances in order and currencies are remarkably stable in most countries after the turbulence of 1992 and 1993.

The demon of inflation, though showing slight signs of

rising again, is deemed to be under control and economic policies are being coordinated to an unprecedented extent.

However, a major problem overhanging the bloc is that of stubbornly high unemployment.

More than 17 million people are out of work now and close to 11 million are expected still to be without jobs in 2000 despite the economic recovery.

Nevertheless, the commission has calculated that, with a bit of determination, the EU's target of creating a sing-

le currency in 1997 is once more achievable less than 18 months after many people had declared the plans dead.

"If additional efforts are made in the broad economic policy guidelines of 1993 and 1994, there is a realistic chance of achieving the goal of having a majority of member states fulfilling the convergence criteria by 1996-97," the commission's report said.

The main themes of the guidelines are cutting government debts and deficits and curbing wages.

Under the Maastricht treaty, a majority of countries

can move to stage three of economic and monetary union on Jan. 1, 1997 as long as they meet the criteria on debts, deficits, inflation, interest rates and currency stability.

Of these criteria, the two key stipulations are that government deficits should be below three per cent of gross domestic product or approaching it at a satisfactory rate, and that debt should be below or approaching 60 per cent of GDP.

Two months ago the commission ruled that only Lux-

embourg and Ireland met these two criteria.

The commission's report avoided naming the countries it thought likely to meet the single currency criteria by 1997, but its figures on debts and deficits suggest Denmark, Germany, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Britain and Austria.

These eight countries would constitute a majority of the EU's then 15 members. However, Denmark will have to hold a referendum and Britain has said a referendum is a possibility.

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## Kuwait plans 95/96 budget cuts

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait is planning large budget cuts and might raise prices of some services to achieve a zero deficit by the year 2000, the finance minister has said.

Finance Minister Nasser Abdullah Al Rodhan also told Reuters in an interview that the emirate, which relies heavily on oil revenue, was to factor into its next budget plan a higher OPEC oil output quota which it plans to seek for 1996.

Sheikh Rodhan, asked if Kuwait regards any increase in its OPEC quota as a target as it draws up the budget, said: "Yes — the demand of increasing Kuwait's quota is not the demand of the oil minister only, it is a governmental demand."

The Kuwait News Agency, KUNA Saturday quoted Oil Minister Abdul Mohsen Mudej as saying he would ask OPEC to increase its output quota by 200,000 bpd when OPEC reviews quotas.

Kuwait had said it would adhere to its current 2.0 million bpd quota but that it would ask for the quota increase when the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Coun-

tries (OPEC) meets in November 1995 to review them.

Oil supplies about 90 per cent of the revenue for Kuwait's budget, which parliament is due to receive in May for debate.

Sheikh Rodhan said the emirate targets a zero budget deficit by the year 2000 and it sees a budget cut of up to \$1.0 billion in the 1995/96 fiscal year to achieve that goal.

He said a government committee was drawing up plans to trim spending and increase non-oil revenue in the emirate, where about one million of the 1.7 million population are expatriates, mostly Asian and Arab workers.

The cabinet ... set the year 2000 for a zero deficit," Sheikh Rodhan said. "That is not only a target and a wish. There are measures taken to reach that target."

"We are trying to reduce (the budget) by 250 to 300 million dinars (\$834 million to \$1.0 billion) per year according to the programme," he said. "This year ... we are talking about 250 to 300 million."

He said Kuwait was reviewing prices of public services, electricity, water, telecommunications, fuel and customs fees and ruled out for now introducing any taxes in the next budget.

"Most of these services are offered for prices that are close to symbolic and heavily subsidised," he said.

"There will not be a sales tax for the time being. We have excluded that until economic positions improve," the minister said. "Taxing the income of individuals and companies, that will come for sure (in the future)."

Kuwait currently provides Kuwaitis with free education and health services, guarantees jobs for virtually all nationals, and supplies public services either free or at minimal charges.

Sheikh Rodhan said the government might see the 512 per cent of oil during Kuwait's fiscal year, starting July 1, as a conservative estimate when drawing up the budget.

Kuwait projects 3,973 billion dinars (\$13.2 billion) public spending in the current fiscal year with a budget gap of \$52 billion (\$5.0 billion).

## Egypt rejects IMF demand to devalue pound

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian Prime Minister Ataf Sedki has ruled out once and for all any devaluation of the pound as demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"The government is not going to devalue the pound," said Dr. Sedki, quoted by Saturday's edition of the daily Al Massara.

"The devaluation file has been closed for good and the government will not allow the adoption of similar measures such as lowering interest rates on bank deposits in Egyptian pounds," he said.

An IMF delegation has been in Cairo since the beginning of this month to evaluate Egypt's economic reform programme, launched after the two sides signed an accord in 1991. The talks are due to end Monday.

The IMF is demanding a gradual devaluation by 25 per cent of the Egyptian currency, arguing the pound's inflated value is damaging exports.

Egyptian exports are currently worth \$1.64 billion a year, while the IMF forecast they would reach \$2.98 billion in the 1995/94 financial year.

But Dr. Sedki insisted, "It is not true that such a measure would improve exports. On the contrary it would push up the price of imported products, especially industrial equipment, and so increase inflation."

The IMF, unhappy with the pace and scope of Egypt's reforms, refused to give the go-ahead for the scheduled cancellation of around \$4 billion of Egypt's debt to the Paris Club, a group of creditor countries.

Servicing the debt costs Egypt some \$150 million a year.

Dr. Sedki said the "delay in the cancellation" of the debt "will not have negative repercussions" on the Egyptian economy.

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## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY DECEMBER 18, 1994

By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carroll Wright Foundation

**GENERAL TENDENCIES:** Make your shade more charming today by rethinking your attitude and get into some form of recreation in the outdoors that can help to relieve the tensions you are under from your present work load.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Think about all of your partners and know how to improve the relationship with the one. A day for planning and meditation.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) This is a good day to repay favours to those who have been good to you in one way or another. Be happy at home in the evening with loved ones.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) A good day to be with congenial friends and associates at the pleasures you mutually enjoy. Show more courtesy towards your loved ones.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) Things should go well at home, and you can make any changes which you deem necessary. Be charming towards your close friends.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) Be wherever you can elevate your consciousness and be more aware of your potential success and endeavours. Drive with utmost care today.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 21) Plan how to improve your surroundings and property so that it becomes more valuable. Know what your potential success can be at this time.

**LIBRA:** (September 22 to October 21) You are magnetic now and you should use this quality to gain whatever is most desirable. Driving could be hazardous on the highway today.

**SCORPIO:** (October 22 to November 21) This is a good day to seek knowledge and information of all sorts, especially of a philosophical nature. Make a new friend.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) A fine day for being with friends and loved ones and making better plans for the future. Take time for meditation and solitude.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) Study your position in the community in which you dwell and know how best to improve it. Arrive on time for any appointment you may have.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) Meet with the cleverest persons you know and have a meeting of minds and be mutually cooperative. Take it easy tonight with loved ones.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Get closer to your family and friends today for some pleasant times. Make this a memorable day and evening for all those in your company.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise - Zircon

## THE Daily Crossword by Al Becker

ACROSS

- Tooth
- Not at
- Moody
- Bouquet
- Kheymam
- Robert
- Israel political leader
- Choice meat cut
- Top
- How cards should be held?
- Sunday talk
- See in the distance
- Plaster work
- Gerstman
- Settle
- room ident
- Hide away
- Adjust boundaries
- Certain meetings
- Distribute
- Types
- Post
- Peter and Paul
- Religion syllable
- Sleep letters
- Equipment
- Walter's relative
- Near miss phrase
- Asian aborigine
- Thought
- Day
- Adolescent
- Kind of tide
- Once more
- Impediment
- the Bonobos
- Famed

DOWN

- Artel Chagall
- Narcissistic
- Western timber wolf
- Wrong
- Indian princess
- Alone
- Melville work
- Bangor's state
- Hemlocky or
- Boysie
- Shoe
- Madras plant
- Camera part
- Linear measure
- Hackneyed
- Cold shoulders
- Killer whale
- A Heise
- Some bacteria
- Carry on
- English racing
- Deal
- Desamich
- Somewhat humorous
- Another English word
- Sub
- Present time
- Diamond's "Blue"
- Heavenly realm
- Texas boundary river
- Draft class
- Lesser
- Daily, for one
- Cal. wine town
- Goose
- Can't eat
- Autism

Print answer here: A

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: PLAID SYNOD WHALER WAYLAY  
Answer: What they considered the card shark's suggestion — A SHADY DEAL

## Australia applies interest rate brakes to speeding economy

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australia's central bank applied the brakes to the country's runaway economy, lifting the official interest rate by one percentage point and triggering a rally on currency and bond markets.

Authorities said they were determined to prevent a rise in inflation as a result of 6.4 per cent economic growth in the year to September, which was among the fastest in the industrialised world.

"Today's rise was essential to moderate demand growth and avoid a boom-bust cycle developing," Treasurer Ralph Willis told media.

Mr. Willis said high demand growth revealed in November's economic data indicated a need for a higher interest rate to "moderate inflationary pressures."

"The decision reflects the commitment of the government and the Reserve Bank to maintain a low inflation environment and encourage further significant and sustained reductions in unemployment," he said.

"Today's rate rise will not put at risk continued growth in investment and employment. On the contrary, it will help ensure that economic

recovery is sustained by moderating the expansion in demand," Mr. Willis said.

Mr. Willis indicated earlier the government would also tighten fiscal policy in 1995, telling business economists: "If the government does decide to tighten fiscal policy, in my view it will be difficult not to increase taxes."

Bernie Fraser, governor of the central bank, said underlying consumer prices were rising by only about two per cent a year, as they had been for about three years.

A report by Citibank Australia forecast another interest rate rise of around 0.75 percentage points from February, adding that slower economic activity and tighter fiscal policy would lead to the rate peaking at around 9.0 per cent.

## France to reduce borrowing

PARIS (AFP) — France is to cut its borrowing requirement by 30 billion francs (\$5.3 billion) next year, Economy Minister Edmond Alphandery said Friday.

He said deficit reduction remained a government priority.

He also forecast that the economy might grow by nearly 3.5 per cent next year.

In remarks interpreted as a response to a warning by the governor of the Bank of France Jean-Claude Tichet Thursday that the government had to bear down on deficits, Mr. Alphandery said that France would meet the budgetary criteria laid down under the Maastricht treaty.

The state had set its borrowing requirement for next year at 470 billion francs (\$84 billion) from a planned figure of 500 billion francs in 1994, Mr. Alphandery told a conference.

This reduction reflected a reduction of the budget deficit. In 1995 the issue of bonds, with the same profile as treasury bonds (OATs), would amount to about 250 billion francs from 250 billion francs in 1994 and the issue of treasury bonds bearing annual interest (BTAN) to about 220 billion francs.

In 1994 the borrowing programme would have been completed to the extent of 99.2 per cent. In 1995 the total of issues would be reduced by 26 billion francs from the figure for 1994.

Mr. Alphandery said that France would meet the two criteria for deficits laid down under the Maastricht treaty for economic and political cooperation within the European Union.

The consolidated debt of public institutions must

amount to no more than 60 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) and the public deficit must be no more than three per cent of GDP.

"Nobody is questioning the priority giving to the reduction of the deficits, and in any case uncertainty must under no circumstances become a pretext for concern," he said.

The debt of public administrations would amount to about 49 per cent of GDP in 1994 from 45.8 per cent in 1993 but would be stabilised at "significantly less than 55 per cent of GDP" in 1997.

The state debt alone, in terms of GDP, would be stabilised in 1997, he said.

A five-year plan to reduce the budget deficit "is on the rails." Under this plan the budget deficit is to be reduced to 3.5 per cent of GDP in 1995 from 4.1 per cent in 1994.

## Peanuts



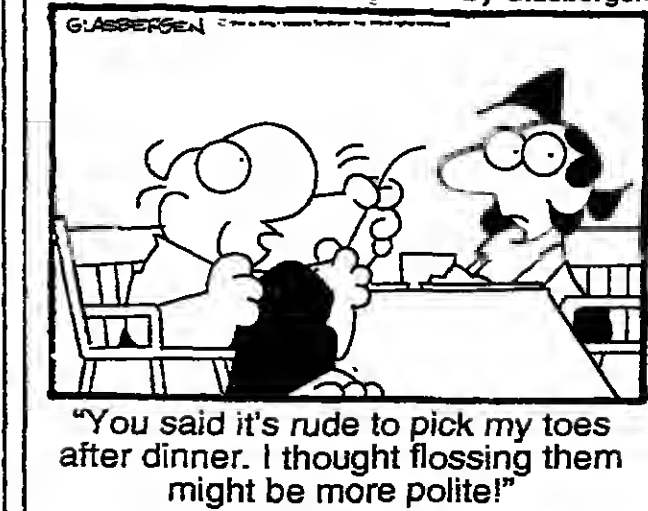
## Andy Capp



## Mutt'n'Jeff



## THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



## JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NECHE

TIBUL

MOYGOL

CAULNY

Do you have a light?

WHAT SHE WAS LOOKING FOR AT THE SINGLES DANCE.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: A

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: PLAID SYNOD WHALER WAYLAY  
Answer: What they considered the card shark's suggestion — A SHADY DEAL



## business daily beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

### Refinery sells gas cylinders directly to public

★ The Jordanian Petroleum Refinery Co. (JPRC) is filling gas cylinders at a rate of 91,000 a day and has started selling them directly to the public at a cost of JD 18.050 per cylinder holding 12.50 kilograms of gas. Selling centres are now at Umm Al Hiran, JPRC headquarters in Jabal Amman (First Circle), the JPRC office in Irbid and at the refinery site near Zarqa. Additional centres in all governorates will be announced this week. According to Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Talal Ureikat, JPRC had filled nearly one million cylinders with gas since the beginning of the year. He said the refinery, which makes between 300 to 500 cylinders a day, had manufactured 107,000 cylinders during the past eleven months, 20,000 more than the output during the same period last year. The minister said anybody has the right to import gas cylinders as long as they meet the terms and specifications of the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the JPRC (Al Rai).

★ The Al Sharq Investment Projects Co. was declared operational after completing all the required legal steps. Chosen for the board of directors at a general assembly meeting were: Dr. Ahmad Hourani (chairman), Mohammad Saleh Hourani (deputy chairman and general manager), Dr. Ziyad Fariz, Azzam Yash, Munjed Sokhian, Mohammad Wafiq Daraghmeb and the United Jordanian Company for Investment. Founders of Al Sharq plan to build a 4-star hotel in Amman and a commercial and amusement centre on the same location. They are already making the necessary contacts to select an international company to manage and run the hotel. Furthermore, Al Sharq founders have conducted studies to set up a factory to produce corn starch and are negotiating with an industrial firm which manufactures boilers for central heating over an investment that would expand, modernise and raise the output of the factory (Al Dustour).

★ Vegetable and fruit imports from the West Bank and Gaza during November 1994 amounted to about 11,000 tonnes (Al Dustour).

★ Amman is home to 25 per cent of the Kingdom's population but it also has the largest number of "urban poor." According to a study, the largest concentration of poor lives in Al Yarmouk area on the eastern outskirts of Amman (Al Dustour).

★ Tomato prices will be going down within a week as the Ghor Al Safi produce begins to flow to the market. An agricultural engineer predicted a good quality supply of tomatoes will be on the market over the coming three months (Al Aswaq).

★ The livestock market is expected to become a flourishing business once trade opens up with Gaza and the West Bank. According to informed sources Jordan's slaughterhouses could provide 40 per cent of the meat needs of the self-rule Palestinian areas where a kilogramme of meat costs now up to JD 10 (Al Aswaq).

★ Amman will be divided into three sections for the purpose of collecting water charges, laying down of water networks, maintenance and receiving complaints and follow ups. The south Amman section, which will cover about 35,000 people living in Sabab, Quweismeh, Abu Alanda and Al Muqablain, will start its functions early next year to be followed later by the other two sections (Sawt Al Shaab).

### AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI  
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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 17/12/1994

COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	TRADE VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK	780	143,670	185.000	184.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	5,865	26,034	4.480	4.430
BANK OF JORDAN	2,000	7,625	3.900	3.800
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	2,500	3,926	1.630	1.560
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	4,500	13,410	2.980	2.980
THE HOUSING BANK	3,850	21,218	5.600	5.550
JORDAN KOWAT BANK	14,295	43,014	3.010	3.010
JORDAN GULF BANK	2,000	8,607	1.680	1.640
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	600	2,208	3.710	3.680
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	4,382	16,056	3.700	3.670
SBIT ELHAL SAVINGS INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	1,250	4,000	3.220	3.200
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	24,766	37,642	1.520	1.520
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	5,761	9,672	1.700	1.680
JERUSALEM INSURANCE	100	421	4.200	4.210
AL-NISR AL-ARABI INSURANCE	200	820	3.900	4.100
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	1,459	2,260	1.560	1.550
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	5,150	7,780	1.520	1.510
IRBITO DISTRICT ELECTRICITY	1,400	5,415	0.950	0.950
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	150	780	5.210	5.200
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	50	162	3.230	3.230
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	1,232	3,003	2.460	2.440
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	2,700	2,889	1.070	1.070
MACHINERY EQUIP. REPAIRING & MAINTENANCE	8,350	6,680	0.800	0.800
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALRAI	250	2,850	11.400	11.400
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODORE HOTELS	1,000	2,473	2.510	2.470
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	1,350	4,483	3.320	3.330
JORDANIAN EXPATRIATES INVESTMENT HOLDING	200	276	1.360	1.380
ATTANJER CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	1,400	1,792	1.280	1.280
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	65,937	192,479	2.920	2.920
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	200	536	2.700	2.650
THE ARAB POTASH/NEW	750	3,948	5.450	5.200
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	461	4,258	9.240	9.240
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	13,063	71,956	5.700	5.500
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	850	854	1.020	1.000
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	1,545	10,771	7.100	6.950
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	13,400	12,599	0.960	0.940
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	850	1,180	1.400	1.390
JORDAN ROCKWOOL INDUSTRIES	1,000	1,560	1.580	1.560
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JIMCO	12,850	11,007	0.870	0.850
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	450	909	2.040	2.020
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	450	1,251	2.800	2.780
KAWTHER INVESTMENT	150	267	1.800	1.780
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES CO.	350	1,474	4.280	4.210
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	1,396	3,736	2.680	2.680
GRAND TOTAL	215,930	693,486		

NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	127,600
TRADE VOLUME IN THE PARALLEL MARKET	140,118

### Financial Markets

Currency	New York Close	New York Close
	15/12/94	16/12/94
Sterling Pound	1.5650	1.5605
Deutsche Mark	1.5711	1.5728
Swiss Franc	1.5270	1.5329
French Franc	5.4145	5.4235
Japanese Yen	100.38	100.23
European Currency Unit	1.2130	1.2125

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	376.65	7.60	Silver	4.80	0.105

### Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7020	0.7040
Sterling Pound	1.0941	1.0996
Deutsche Mark	0.4465	0.4485
Swiss Franc	0.5264	0.5290
French Franc	0.1293	0.1299
Japanese Yen	0.6090	0.7025
Dutch Guilder	0.3980	0.3900
Swedish Krona	0.0428	0.0430
Italian Lira	0.0428	0.0430
Belgian Franc	0.0428	0.0430

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.5460	1.8620
Lebanese Lira	0.041225	0.042580
Saudi Riyal	0.1860	0.1899
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.5050	2.3600
Qatari Riyal	0.1916	0.1929
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2150
Omani Riyal	1.8060	1.8240
UAE Dirham	0.1905	0.1915
Greek Drachma	0.2600	0.3165
Cypriot Pound	1.4015	1.5310

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### Saudi firm to build iron, steel plants

MANAMA (R) — A company owned by Saudi investors plans to build two iron and steel products plants in Bahrain at a cost of \$600 million, industry sources have said.

They said United Industrial Investment Company (UIC) was negotiating with two German firms to build the plants to meet a growing demand for products in the region.

One senior industry source named the two German engineering and contracting companies as Mannesmann-Demag MMWG and Lurgi.

"We are waiting for the financial side to be finalised in Germany and work for the construction of the plants is expected to start early in 1995," he told Reuters.

He said the bulk of the plants' cost would be financed by a German bank, which he declined to name. A portion of the cost would also be raised from banks in Bahrain, he added.

When completed in three years, the iron plant would have a one-million-tonne production capacity to produce HPI (hot bracketed iron) and the steel plant 200,000 tonnes of seamless pipes annually.

## Gulf privatisation plan may create unemployment

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states are reluctant to privatise public facilities to offset low oil prices for fear it could create unemployment among their nationals, a regional study said Saturday.

The six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states are striving to convince the private sector to employ more nationals and cut reliance on foreigners, who account for more than half the workforce.

But under privatisation many local employees could find themselves jobless as expatriates are preferred as cheaper and more skilled labour, said the study by Heory Azzam, chief economist at the National Commercial Bank, the biggest bank in Saudi Arabia.

"Public departments in the GCC countries are characterised by the high number of national employees, some of whom will likely lose their jobs when those departments are privatised," Mr. Azzam said in the study, published in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) newspaper Al Khaleej.

"Private management will seek to increase foreign workers at the expense of locals because those workers accept low salaries and the labour laws governing them are more flexible in terms of employment and sacking," he pointed out.

Most GCC citizens prefer the public sector because they get higher wages and more job and retirement benefits.

GCC governments have sought to force the private sector to take more native workers but mainly in vain.

The six states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the UAE — have announced plans to privatise some key state institutions to sweeping economic reforms triggered by the decline in oil prices.

Low prices have created persistent deficits in the GCC budget and balance of payments and forced member states to withdraw from their overseas reserves and borrow from the local and international markets.

Experts estimated the internal debt of the six members at around \$79 billion. In Kuwait, Qatar and the

UAE, foreigners account for more than two thirds of the total workforce while in Oman and Bahrain, extensive training of locals has enabled them to ease gradually reliance on expatriates.

Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil producer and the biggest GCC nation, still has a large foreign labour force despite job nationalisation efforts.

Mr. Azzam said privatisation could also lead to an increase in prices as the switch to the private sector will remove government subsidies.

In the stock markets, such a process will cause a decline in share prices as the bourses could not be ready to absorb large floatations he added.

In the short term, GCC states will lose from privatisation as they will no longer earn from fully privatised institutions and they do not impose taxes.

"Despite the positive objectives of privatisations, the negative effects of the process is forcing GCC governments to hesitate," Mr. Azzam said.

### Emirates airline posts record \$24.4m profits

DUBAI (R) — Emirates airline has said profits in the 1993/4 financial year jumped to a record \$24.4 million from \$2.9 million the year before.

The airline, owned by the state of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, said it expects to at least match 1993/4 figures in the current financial year to March 31, 1995.

We are confident that in the next year (1994/5) profit will be at least the same or more than we made this year," Chairman Ahmad Bin Saeed Al Maktoum told a news briefing.

He attributed sharply higher profits to a 23 per cent increase in passengers carried to more than two million in 1993/4, innovative and high-quality products and rigorous management discipline.

He said the stronger results were achieved during a global recession when the airline industry was suffering from capacity surpluses, low yields and heavy losses.

"Emirates has demonstrated a record of consistent profitability, whereas the combined loss of the world's airlines in the past four years amounted to \$16 billion," he explained.

This is the first time the airline has released audited financial accounts. Sheikh Ahmad said Emirates had decided to release results after continued requests to do so, and to squash claims that the airline was not profitable and relied on government support.

The time has come to really show people that we really are profitable," he pointed out.

The airline's first annual report showed 1993/4's profits of \$24.4 million were generated from total revenue of \$600.44 million from \$497.8 million the previous year.

Total expenditure edged up to \$576.02 million from \$494.82 million. A 26.9 per cent increase in cargo revenues brought cargo's contribution to total transport revenue to 14.1 per cent.

Sheikh Ahmad said since it started operating in 1985, Emirates had only "lost a little bit of money — 24 million dirhams (\$6.54 million) once, in its second year.

Profits of \$2.9 million, \$18.38 million, \$6.37 million and \$9.11 million were recorded in 1992/3, 1991/2, 1990/1 and 1989/90 respectively.



## IOC considers cooling men's marathon in '96

ATLANTA (AP) — The Olympics are very big on tradition.

That's why, come heat or high humidity, the chief organizer of the Atlanta Olympics would like to see the Games finish with the men's marathon.

Billy Payne stressed that athletes, doctors, athletics officials and the world's Olympic committees would help make the decision on whether running the marathon in the hottest part of a southern American summer day poses a health risk. Some believe that the event should be staged at a cooler hour.

But Payne, president of the Atlanta Committee of the Olympic Games, made it plain that were it up to him, tradition would remain untouched.

"Preferably, the marathon ends when the closing ceremonies begin," Payne said after he and other ACOG officials briefed the IOC's executive board on preparations for the Games, now 20 months away.

The issue surfaced again last month when two experienced runners collapsed and died during the New York City Marathon, which was run in unseasonably warm and humid conditions. With afternoon highs for the final day of the Games, Aug. 4, averaging near 32 degrees Celsius (90 Fahrenheit), and

humidity to match, some world-class marathoners have called for the Olympic race to be run in the morning, as the women's marathon has been since it joined the Games in 1984.

Payne is solidly among those who disagree.

Timing of the men's marathon is linked with a second issue in Atlanta—the desire of IAAF president Primo Nebiolo to add a ninth day of his sport to the Olympic schedule, which would generate more TV money for his organization. Nebiolo ultimately will have the marathon is run.

There's plenty of time to come to that decision, Payne said.

Payne and other ACOG officials also gave the International Olympic Committee board their first peek at the opening ceremonies. Without giving details, Payne told a news conference the opening would show the "rich and diverse" makeup of the American South. Even with a mixed regional history, Payne said the show would not be sugar coated.

The American southern states seceded from the federal government in 1860 over the desire to keep black slaves, sparking the American Civil War which lasted until 1865.

Yokozuna was at the Games: Sumo wrestlers will

heave their considerable bulk at the next winter Olympics.

Sumo wrestling was included in plans approved by the IOC executive board for a cultural festival to accompany the Winter Games in Nagano, Japan, in 1998.

Medals will not be awarded, the sumo competitors will be among the artists, actors and flower arrangers who will provide Olympic visitors with "an introduction to another facet of Japanese culture."

Out with the old, in with the new: The panel that has decided for decades what sports are on the Olympic schedule was thrown out Thursday and replaced with a pair of blue-ribbon panels.

IOC general secretary Francois Carrard said the executive board decided to disband the programme commission, which has reviewed applications for Olympic status from sports ranging from gold to bodybuilding.

In its place will be two panels of experts on various areas of the games, from sports to finance. They will include but won't be limited to IOC members, Carrard said.

The IOC official said the move was aimed at eliminating political influence from decisions on Olympic berths and to streamline the process for considering changes in the

programme.

Remnants of the Soviet Union, under six former republics of the Soviet Union have formed a sports union, but don't look for a return of the Olympic superpower of the last four decades.

National Olympic Committee from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Uzbekistan formed the Association of the Olympic Commonwealth to further "the multilateral cooperation in the field of sports and strengthening of the Olympic movement."

There are no plans to field a united team, officials said.

IOC member and Russian Olympic Committee president Vitali Smirnov was elected president of the new association.

Uphill struggle for Olympic rugby: Rugby may yet make it to the 2000 Olympic Games but the chances appear to be slim, according to a top Sydney organizer Friday.

John Coates, vice-chairman of the organising committee, said that the inclusion of two new sports — taekwondo and triathlon — by the International Olympic Committee had made it more difficult for rugby.

"We have just included two new Olympic sports," Coates said. "We must keep the 10,000 athletes figure as a

maximum.

"We cannot include another sport without eliminating some other sport such as beach volleyball, canoe slalom or softball, which is coming on strong in Australia, and which are on the programme as provisional."

"This will be decided, if we have to discuss the issue, in December 1996, after the Atlanta Games," he said.

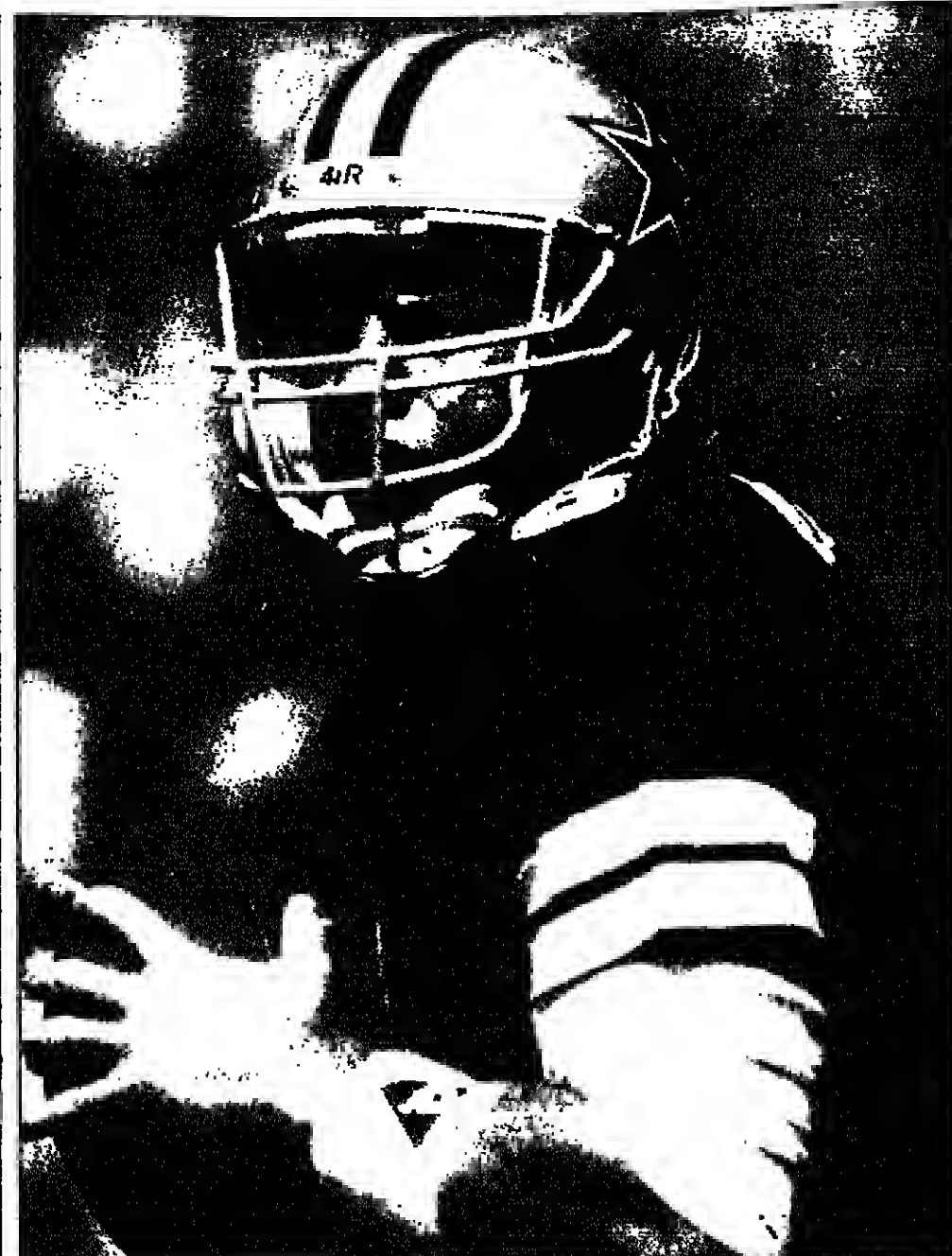
What Chinese doping scandal: The Olympics' top anti-doping official said Friday that drug use by athletes in China is no worse than in any other country.

Prince Alexandre de Merode, chairman of the International Olympic Committee's medical commission, downplayed the recent spate of positive tests involving Chinese athletes as isolated cases.

While ruling out any systematic doping programme in China, De Merode called on Chinese sports bodies to take tough sanctions against any coaches or officials who might be responsible for providing drugs to athletes.

But De Merode said there was no reason to single out China.

"The Chinese had a delegation of 500 athletes at the Asian games, and about 10 positive cases is not such a high percentage," De Merode said.



Dallas quarterback Troy Aikman

## Cowboys, 49ers dominate Pro Bowl selections

NEW YORK (R) — The Dallas Cowboys and San Francisco 49ers dominated voting for the Pro Bowl much as they have dominated opponents as the two powerhouses accounted for 21 spots on the 42-man National Conference Pro Bowl squad.

Eleven members of the Eastern Division champion Cowboys and nine players from the Western Division champion 49ers were selected through balloting by players, coaches and fans for the game scheduled for Sunday, February 5 in Honolulu.

Running back Emmitt Smith was among six Cowboys named as starters.

Smith will be joined by guard Nate Newton, centre Mark Stepnoski, safety Darren Woodson, defensive end Charles Haley and defensive tackle Leon Lett.

Other Cowboys selected included quarterback Troy Aikman, wide receiver Michael Irvin, running back Darryl Johnston, tight end Jay Novacek and guard Mark Tuinei.

Quarterback Steve Young, the National Football League's leading passer, was one of five 49ers named as starters.

Two of Young's favourites targets, wide receiver Jerry Rice and tight end Brent Jones, were also selected, along with cornerback Deion Sanders and safety Merton Hanks.

The San Francisco reserves are safety Tim McDonald, centre Bart Oates, guard Jesse Sapolu and defensive tackle Dana Stubblefield.

The Pittsburgh Steelers head the AFC roster with six selections, led by cornerback Rod Woodson, who is making his sixth successive appearance. Woodson was joined by linebackers Kevin Greene and Greg Lloyd, safety Cornell Lake, guard Dorel Love and centre Dermoniti Dawson.

Five Minnesota Vikings — quarterback Warren Moon, wide receiver Cris Carter, guard Randall McDaniel, defensive tackle John Randle and kicker Fuad Reveiz — were named to the NFC squad.

The Miami Dolphins had five players selected to the AFC squad. Quarterback Dan Marino, offensive tackle Richmond Webb and guard Keith Sims were selected as starters, while receiver Irving Fryar and linebacker Bryan Cox were voted as backups.

The San Diego Chargers, Cleveland Browns, Denver Broncos, Los Angeles Raiders and Detroit Lions each have four pro bowlers.

Barry Sanders, who is trying to become the third player in NFL history to gain 2,000 rushing yards in a season, was chosen as a starting NFC running back.

The Seattle Seahawks

Chris Warren, the AFC's leading rusher, will start in the backfield along with rookie Marshall Faulk of the Indianapolis Colts.

The most notable name missing from the Pro Bowl is Atlanta Falcons wide receiver Terance Mathis, who is second in the league with 103 receptions.

Teams changing quarterbacks

With two rounds remaining in the regular season, three American National Football League teams are switching quarterbacks.

The Buffalo Bills were forced to turn to Frank Reich when starter Jim Kelly was ruled out for the remainder of the season — even the playoffs.

At Philadelphia, Bubby Brister takes over for Randall Cunningham in a bid to halt the Eagles' five-game losing streak.

And the Indianapolis Colts have decided to drop Don Majkowski from starter to third-level reserve, and instead go with Jim Harbaugh.

All three of the new starting quarterbacks will be at home Sunday when New England is at Buffalo, the New York Giants travel to Philadelphia.

The next-to-last regular-season weekend begins Saturday with Minnesota at Detroit and Denver at San Francisco.

## Phoenix romp past Knicks for home record win

Phoenix (R) — Danny Manning took charge in the third quarter to help the Phoenix Suns recover from an early deficit and rip the New York Knicks 106-85 Friday for a club-record tying 21st straight home victory.

Manning scored 17 of his 24 points in the third quarter and Charles Barkley scored 26 points as the Pacific Division leading Suns tied a team mark for consecutive home wins set over two seasons from March 2 to November 30, 1980.

The Suns' last home loss came March 18 last season against Detroit. They are 10-0 this season at the America West Arena.

"I guess the Knicks weren't used to the defensive basketball of the west," quipped Phoenix coach Paul Westphal after beating defence-minded New York, the beasts of the East.

"Obviously we caught them at a good time. They were missing (Charles) Oakley, they played last night and we took advantage of both of those things. To be up by six at halftime, shoot 43 per cent and win the game by 25, it's a credit to our defence. We are playing the best defence we've ever played."

The Knicks led by nine in the first quarter, and trailed 47-44 in the third before Manning scored 14 in a 22-7 run.

"We have a lot of weapons on this team and when one guy gets a hand, we try to go to that person," Manning said.

Patrick Ewing scored 15 points to lead New York's scoring.

At Minnesota, Isaiah Rider capped off a 27-point performance with a spectacular three-point play with two



Patrick Ewing of the N. Y. Knicks keeps control of the ball despite his opponent's attempts to steal it away

seconds left, lifting the Timberwolves to their first home victory of the season 94-93 over the New Jersey Nets.

Trailing 93-91, Rider took an inbounds pass at the left side of the three-point arc, dribbled towards the foul line, then spun and hit a bank shot in the lane as he was fouled.

"J.R. made a great move at the end of the game using his athletic ability and quickness to get into the paint," said Nets coach Butch Beard. "Defensively, we converged on him well, he just used his talent to get to the hoop."

The win was the T-Wolves' first at home in 11 games this season. Derrick Coleman led the Nets with 22 points.

At Golden State, Shaquille O'Neal scored 40 points and grabbed 18 rebounds and Anfernee Hardaway had 38 points and 13 assists as the Orlando Magic beat Golden State 131-128 in overtime and banded the Warriors their

ninth consecutive loss. The win was the 15th in 17 games for the Magic, who improved to an NBA-best 17-4 overall.

Golden State outscored the Magic 15-5 in the final 3-1/2 minutes to tie the game at 121-121 and force the overtime.

Dennis Scott and Brian Shaw combined to score seven of Orlando's 10 points in overtime. O'Neal hit 15-of-20 shots from the field, while Hardaway was 16-of-24.

At Indiana, Reggie Miller scored 22 points, including a pair of free throws with six seconds left to break a tie, lifting the Pacers to a 93-91 win over the Charlotte Hornets.

Dell Curry was whistled for a controversial foul as Miller drove the left side of the lane. Miller's two free throws snapped a 91-91 tie and Curry's three-pointer at the buzzer hit the back of the rim and

bounced away. "It was a terrible call," said the disgruntled Curry, who was restrained from the officials by teammates following the game. "He just made a bad call. It was a big game, and to lose it like that takes all the effort we put into the game."

Miller scored 12 of Indiana's 26 points in the third quarter as the Pacers pared down a six-point halftime deficit.

The Hornets were led by 22 points from Larry Johnson.

In Atlanta, the Chicago Bulls held the Hawks without a field goal in the final five minutes to win 85-80.

After a layup by Tyrone Corbin with 5:20 remaining gave Atlanta a 78-77 lead, the Bulls finished with an 8-2 run.

Scottie Pippen led Chicago with 22 points and eight rebounds. Toni Kukoc had 11 points coming off the bench.

## Chinese star coach says he has cancer

HONG KONG (AP) — Ma Junren, coach of China's record-breaking women runners known as Ma's army, has told a Hong Kong newspaper he has throat cancer.

Ma, famed for his rigorous coaching methods and health potions made from turtle blood, told the Eastern Express that the doctors who diagnosed his illness ordered him to stop work.

Ma also said his father is critically ill, "so I can't risk going to the hospital for test and treatment at the moment. I don't want to be bedridden if he dies."

The newspaper quoted the 51-year-old coach as saying there had been no training for about a month.

Ma's runners dominated last year's World Championships in Stuttgart and shattered the world 1,500-3,000 and 10,000-metre records a month later in Beijing.

But this year they missed several major meets and ran below their best at the Asian Games in Hiroshima in October.

In an interview with the Associated Press at the Asian Games, a tired-looking Ma said he felt overworked, was vomiting his food and suffering from stress-induced blood pressure problems.

Ma told the Eastern Express that more tests were needed to determine the extent of his cancer and possible treatment.

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## Real, Pesaro lead in Euro basketball

LONDON (R) — Results of European Champion Clubs' Cup basketball semifinal series matches:

**Group A**  
 \* In Pesaro: Pesaro (Italy) 88 Benfica (Portugal) 75 (41-38)  
 leading scorers:  
 Pesaro: Antonello Riva 22  
 Benfica: Conceicao 23

**Group B**  
 \* In Bologna: Bologna (Italy) 72 Olympiakos (Greece) 68 (40-38)

Leading scorers:  
 Bologna: Paolo Moretti 20  
 Olympiakos: Eddie Johnson 25

\* In Zagreb: Cibona

Zagreb (Croatia) 84 Bayer Leverkusen (Germany) 94 (halftime 42-56).

Leading scorers:  
 Cibona — Veljko Masic 19,  
 Gerrode Abrams 19, Ivica Zuric 17  
 Bayer — Thomas Garrick 23, Abdul Shamsud-Deen 20, Hanning 16.

\* In Barcelona: Barcelona (Spain) 61 Efes Pilsen (Turkey) 53 (26-30)  
 Leading scorers:  
 Barcelona — Roy Fisher 22, Ferran Martinez 16  
 Efes Pilsen — Chris Corchiani 14, Volkan Aydin 14, Ufuk Sarica 13

\* In Tel Aviv: Maccabi Tel Aviv (Israel) 92 CSKA Moscow (Russia) 89 (after extra-time, score at fulltime 83-83).

## Champion Clubs' group standings

Group A				
Real Madrid (Spain)	6	5	1	11
Pesaro (Italy)	6	4	2	10
Panathinaikos (Greece)	6	3	3	9
CSKA Moscow (Russia)	6	3	3	9
Paok Salonika (Greece)	6	2	4	8
Olympia Ljubljana (Slovenia)	6	2	4	8
Benfica (Portugal)	6	0	6	6

Group B				
Limoges (France)	6	4	2	10
Barcelona (Spain)	6	4	2	10
Olympiakos (Greece)	6	4	2	10
Bologna (Italy)	6	4	2	10
Cibona Zagreb (Croatia)	6	3	3	9
Efes Istanbul (Turkey)	6	3	3	9
Bayer Leverkusen (Germany)	6	2	4	8
Juventud Badalona (Spain)	6	0	6	6

Halftime 38-33)  
 Leading scorers:  
 Maccabi — Radisav Curcic 31, Norris Coleman 19,  
 Doron Jamchy 16  
 CSKA — Igor Koudelin 22,  
 Sergei Panov 18, Patrick Eddie 17.

## IAAF strips Britain of World Cup place

MONACO (AFP) — The ruling International Amateur Athletic Federation announced Friday night that it had stripped the Great Britain women's team of its fifth place at the IAAF World Cup.

The move followed a British Athletic Federation disciplinary hearing which found 800m runner Diane Modahl guilty of a doping offence and banned her for four years. Modahl, who maintains her innocence, tested positive at a meeting in Lisbon on June 18, when her urine sample was shown to contain massive levels of the male hormone testosterone.

A week later, it was Modahl's 800m victory at the European Cup meet in Birmingham which enabled Britain to pip Russia to a place at the World Cup in London in September.

The IAAF issued a statement saying it had annulled the British women's performances at Crystal Palace and issued a revised set of World Cup standings. The changes did not affect any of the positions.

Friday's striking from the record books was widely expected after the BAF's decision. Istvan Gyulai, the IAAF general secretary, had written to BAF executive chairman Prof. Peter Radford a week before the World Cup with a clear warning.

"We feel it is our duty to inform you that should the athlete (Modahl) be eventually rendered ineligible according to IAAF rules and procedures, any result achieved by the British women's team would, regrettably, not be considered valid in the standings of the competition."

Europe won the Cup, followed by the Americas, Germany and Africa. With Britain disqualified, Asia moved up to fifth place, Oceania sixth and the USA seventh.

Modahl, who has the right of appeal under BAF and IAAF rules, insisted on Wednesday: "I have never taken any banned substance. I shall challenge the committee's decision."

## Beckenbauer criticises UEFA competitions

FRANKFURT (AP) — Franz Beckenbauer has more advice for soccer authorities: A two-tier qualifying round that would eliminate a number of smaller nations before they get to meet the traditional powers.

Beckenbauer, the former German star and coach, was reacting to the current European Championship qualifying round, specifically to Germany's recent opponents Albania and Moldova.

cer powers such as Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and England play each other too infrequently, Beckenbauer wrote in his column Friday in the mass-circulation newspaper Bild.

"First Albania, then Moldova, on Sunday Albania again. To be quite honest: I can't watch these games any more," Beckenbauer wrote. "Germany plays Albania in a group 7 qualifier Sunday after beating both Albania and Moldova on the road."

"When I think of national team games, I imagine contests between great nations, with Italy, England, Holland. Now, we have to wait for these classic games two years. Such games as against Moldova and Albania are a devaluation of the national team."

UEFA, Europe's governing soccer body, should consider such a move, he said. Smaller nations should be helped financially, "but please don't let them play for European Championship points," Beckenbauer said.

The outspoken Beckenbauer was involved in a bitter exchange recently with FIFA, soccer's world governing body.

In an open letter Tognoni suggested Beckenbauer should stick to playing golf, horseback riding, or sailing, but not get involved in a discussion about the rules.

FIFA later apologized for the tone of the letter.

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## Assinger leads Austria in downhill

VAL D'ISERE, France (R) — Veteran Armin Assinger led Austria to a clean sweep in the second downhill of the men's Alpine Skiing World Cup season Saturday.

The 30-year-old from Hermagor clocked 1:56.07 to snatch his fourth World Cup victory, his third in a downhill, ahead of three of his compatriots.

His feat prevented former Olympic champion Patrick Ortlieb, who finished second in 1:56.46, from closing in on Italian slalom king Alberto Tomba at the top of the overall standings.

Tomba, who will start favourite in a giant slalom Sunday, retained first place overall on 250 points to Ortlieb's 230.

Youngster Josef Strobl, who shot to fame on Friday by winning the first ever downhill in his career, confirmed that he had become, at the age of 20, a skier to watch by taking third place, 42 hundredths of a second behind Assinger.

All-rounder Guenther Mader, third behind Strobl on the same piste on Friday, missed a place on the rostrum by 30 hundredths of a second.

It was the first time since March 1987 in Nakiska, Canada, that a country had four men in the lead in a downhill.

## Table Tennis World Cup Saive, Gaten reach final

TAIPEI (R) — World number one Jean-Michel Saive beat an injured Zoran Primorac Saturday to claim a place in the World Cup Table Tennis final against Jean-Philippe Gaten.

Belgian Saive overcame his Brussels clubmate 18-21 21-19 21-12 21-18 after Primorac smashed his hand against the table in the second game, causing bleeding and bruising from two fingers and a thumb.

"It was bleeding all the time. I lost about 30 to 40 per cent of my concentration," Croatia Primorac said of his injury, suffered as he attempted a top-spin forehand from below the table.

World champion Gaten finally vanquished world number two Jan-Ove Waldner of Sweden 21-19 17-21 13-21 21-10 21-12 in the other semifinal.

Waldner's concentration looked to be waning in the last two games. He rolled his eyes and stamped his feet as he lost successive points.

The Frenchman said: "I knew I would win in the middle of the last game. I saw his face. He looked pretty depressed."

European champion and world silver medalist Jean-Philippe Gaten had one of his best wins of the season over Wang Tao by 15-21, 21-19, 21-18, 22-20.

In other matches, Jan-Ove Waldner of Sweden had downed Kong Linghui of China 13-21, 21-18, 8-21, 21-16, 21-14 winner, while



1992 Olympic champion Swedish Jan-Ove Waldner, eyes the ball during the first run of the 1994 Table Tennis World Cup Championship (AFP photo)

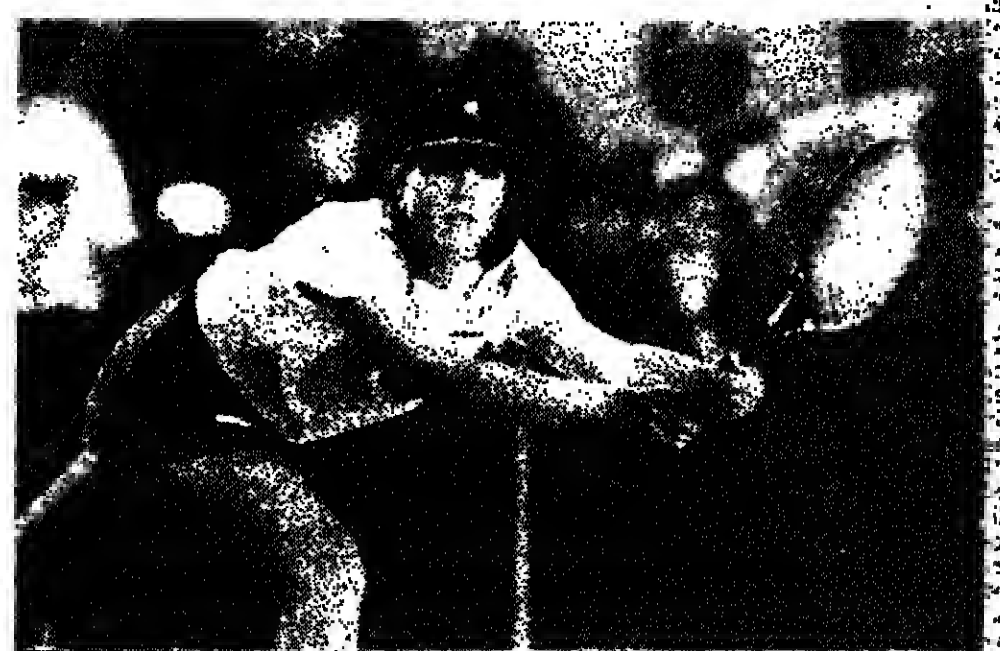
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## Capriati to play in March

KEY BISCAYNE (AP) — Jennifer Capriati, who upset defending champion and world No. 1 Monica Seles in the 1992 Lipton Championships, will return to the Key Biscayne Tournament in March.

After not playing competitive tennis for more than a year, Capriati, 18, lost her first tournament match last month to Anke Huber at the Virginia Slims in Philadelphia. Her participation in the Lipton would be her first South Florida tournament in two years.



Jennifer Capriati

## GOREN BRIDGE

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## WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
 ♠KQJ9 VAQ76 ♠AJS ♠AKJ  
 Partner opens the bidding with one no trump. What do you respond?

Q.2—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
 ♠AJ5 ♠1098 ♠543 ♠Q743  
 The bidding has proceeded:  
 West North East South  
 1 ♠ 2 ♣  
 What action do you take?

Q.3—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
 ♠KJ5 ♠Q743 ♠762 ♠942  
 Partner opens the bidding with two no trump. What action do you take?

Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
 ♠443 ♠K106 ♠KQ ♠Q10954  
 The bidding has proceeded:  
 North East South West  
 1 ♠ 2 ♣  
 What action do you take?

Q.5—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
 ♠J5 ♠AK1082 ♠K8 ♠Q107  
 The bidding has proceeded:  
 North East South West  
 1 ♠ 2 ♣  
 What action do you take?

Q.6—As South, vulnerable, you hold:  
 ♠832 ♠KJ109 ♠Vold ♠AJ9652  
 Partner opens the bidding with one diamond. What do you respond?

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CHEB	Rachid Bouchareb (France/Algeria)	21/12/94
THE LOST NECKLACE OF THE DOVE	Nacer Khemir (France/Italy/Tunisia)	22/12/94
IN SEARCH OF THE HUSBAND OF MY WIFE	Mohammed Abdurrahman Tazi (Morocco)	23/12/94

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## Frenchman kidnapped and Pakistani shot in Somalia

MOGADISHU (R) — A Pakistani U.N. peacekeeper was wounded and a French aid worker kidnapped Saturday in the lawless capital of Somalia as the United Nations prepares for what could be a complicated and dangerous pullout in March.

U.N. military spokesman Major Zubair Chatha told reporters that the Pakistani was hit by a stray bullet and was being treated in the U.N. hospital. His condition was stable.

Chatha said the soldier was at the airport when he was hit.

The spokesman said the aid worker, with the French charity Action Internationale Contre la Faim (AICF), was being held by gunmen who seized him at a roundabout in Mogadishu.

The gunmen, believed to be former employees of the agency, were demanding a ransom for his release, the spokesman said, but gave no further details.

In Paris, the French LCI television channel named the man as Marc Rudy, 24, and said he was abducted while driving to the airport in the south of the capital, which is controlled by faction leader Mohammed Farah Aided.

Acts of lawlessness have increased throughout the broken Horn of Africa country where the U.N. has reduced its peacekeeping in readiness for a complete pullout in March, which military analysts say could be complicated and dangerous.

Mogadishu airport, where the Pakistani was shot, is adjacent to the seaport and will be the main staging ground for the final evacuation of the last of the 15,000-strong U.N. force in Somalia. They are due out before March 31.

U.N. forces have already withdrawn from all Somali towns and villages except the capital, Mogadishu.

On Friday, U.S. President Bill Clinton approved the dispatch of marines and ships to Somalia to help protect U.N. troops as they leave.

U.N. officials in Mogadishu told reporters the marine force would number 4,000 and be backed by massive naval and airpower.

In Washington, U.S. officials said this would possibly include AC-130 Spectre gunships, widely used by the United States last year in a futile hunt for Mr. Aided.

Besides covering the U.N. withdrawal, they said, the marines' mission would be to remove weapons, particularly tanks, to prevent their capture by Somali factions.

"We're looking at really... that last few days of very dangerous separation (withdrawal)," Deputy Secretary of Defence John Deutch said at a Pentagon briefing.

He said Clinton approved the U.S. mission, limited specifically to the final days of the U.N. withdrawal, on Friday at a meeting with his top security advisers, including Deutch and Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Other U.S. officials said any U.S. combat involvement in Somalia, if severe fighting broke out before the final U.N. withdrawal for example, would have to be approved by Mr. Clinton separately.

Defence Secretary William Perry told reporters that about 1,800 U.S. marines were preparing to head for the waters off Mogadishu in a three-ship amphibious assault force led by the landing ship Essex. He said more forces would be added later.

"We are getting ourselves in a state of readiness to do this," Mr. Perry told reporters flying home with him from a visit to Moscow.

Admiral William Owens, vice chairman of the U.S. military joint chiefs of staff, said at the Pentagon briefing that the marines in Mogadishu would be supported by overwhelming force offshore.

The U.N. Security Council agreed on Nov. 4 to end its costly Somalia mission, calling for a secure withdrawal. The U.N. sought help from the United States, Britain, France, Italy, India and Pakistan for the operation, under threat of looting from fighting factions.

U.N. troops were first deployed in 1992 to rescue Somalis from famine and chaos in which hundreds of thousands died and more than one million fled to neighbouring countries after the downfall of President Mohammed Siad Barre the previous year.



Uniformed Secret Service agents search the grounds behind the White House for evidence after shots were fired at the White House on Saturday. U.S. President Bill Clinton was asleep upstairs at the time and "was never in any danger," the Secret Service said (see story on page 5NAPP photo)

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## Syria denies getting arms from N. Korea

DAMASCUS (AP) — A government-run newspaper Saturday denied Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's allegations that North Korea is providing Syria with sophisticated weapons.

"Rabin's statements are a sheer lie because evidence has proven that Israel is the country which is accumulating weapons, assembling missiles and spending funds abundantly on developing and modernising its arsenal to threaten the Arabs and to spread its hegemony in the Arab arena," the Tishrin daily said in a front-page editorial.

Mr. Rabin, speaking in the South Korean capital of Seoul, Wednesday accused North Korea of providing Iran and Syria with Scud-C missiles. These have a range of 310 miles (500 kilometres).

He also urged the United States and South Korea to try to persuade Pyongyang to curtail arms sales, saying the North's actions encourage Islamic extremists in Iran and threaten moderate Arab nations.

North Korea has said Israel was "fabricating groundless facts."

"Undoubtedly, Israel's attempts to disarm the Arabs aims at weakening the Arabs, to drag them into more concessions in lands and rights and to impose its conditions on them," Tishrin added.

It charged that the Israeli accusations are a new "manoeuvre to evade the peace process and to sabotage peace efforts."

"Whenever there is a glimmer of hope in the horizon of the peace process, Israel resorts to manoeuvre and deceit to avoid the bases of the peace process," it noted.

"Israel can't turn facts upside down nor can it go on with its misleading methods, because facts have proven that Israel is the source of tension and disturbance in the region," the newspaper said.

Syria's peace negotiations with Israel have been stalled since February. But Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa disclosed last week that contacts are to be resumed in Washington at a date so far not specified.

It is not known if these will lead to a resumption of full-scale negotiations, but the contacts are seen as an advance that could lead to more meaningful developments.

Meanwhile Mr. Rabin left Seoul for Uzbekistan Saturday after meeting with leading South Korean business conglomerate heads on the last day of a four-day official visit.

He spent the last day of his stay meeting with representatives of South Korean conglomerates, including Hyundai, Daewoo and Lucky Goldstar to discuss ways to enhance economic cooperation between the two countries.

Koo Ja-Kyong, chairman of the Lucky Goldstar Group, told Mr. Rabin that a strategic alliance between Israeli firms and the group in electronics and the petrochemicals industry would be desirable, a spokesman of the group said.

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It charged that the Israeli accusations are a new "manoeuvre to evade the peace process and to sabotage peace efforts."

"Whenever there is a glimmer of hope in the horizon of the peace process, Israel resorts to manoeuvre and deceit to avoid the bases of the peace process," it noted.

"Israel can't turn facts upside down nor can it go on with its misleading methods, because facts have proven that Israel is the source of tension and disturbance in the region," the newspaper said.

Syria's peace negotiations with Israel have been stalled since February. But Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa disclosed last week that contacts are to be resumed in Washington at a date so far not specified.

It is not known if these will lead to a resumption of full-scale negotiations, but the contacts are seen as an advance that could lead to more meaningful developments.

Meanwhile Mr. Rabin left Seoul for Uzbekistan Saturday after meeting with leading South Korean business conglomerate heads on the last day of a four-day official visit.

He spent the last day of his stay meeting with representatives of South Korean conglomerates, including Hyundai, Daewoo and Lucky Goldstar to discuss ways to enhance economic cooperation between the two countries.

Koo Ja-Kyong, chairman of the Lucky Goldstar Group, told Mr. Rabin that a strategic alliance between Israeli firms and the group in electronics and the petrochemicals industry would be desirable, a spokesman of the group said.

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## Princess Anne visits troops at Belfast prison

LISBURN, Northern Ireland (AP) — Princess Anne met troops guarding Northern Ireland's top-security Maze Prison where many IRA and pro-British "loyalist" convicts are held. The Princess Royal is colonel-in-chief of the King's Royal Hussars, who patrol the perimeter of the jail at Lisburn, southwest of Belfast. The princess, daughter of Queen Elizabeth II, also met Friday with Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew, Britain's senior official in the province.

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## Turkish army in fresh offensive against PKK

TUNCELI, Turkey (R) — Turkish forces trying to drive rebel Kurds from Tunceli province in eastern Turkey launched an operation on Saturday against guerrilla positions near the district of Hozat, security sources said.

One soldier and three guerrillas from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) were killed in morning fighting, they said.

The sources said five tonnes of rebel supplies were blown up during the operation, in which some 2,000 soldiers backed by dozens of military vehicles were involved.

The attack in the remote mountainous area between the cities of Tunceli and Hozat is the precursor to the military's plans to enter a valley where the PKK is believed to have large supply stocks, they said.

The Alibogazi valley, about 1.5 km deep and 1.5 km long, is the meeting point of the western districts of Hozat, Ovacik and Cemisgezek.

During the 1936-1938 Kurdish uprising in Tunceli — called Dersim before the government changed the name — hundreds of Turkish soldiers were killed.

Since mid-September

Turkish forces have been trying to flush out thousands of guerrillas based in Tunceli. According to local residents, dozens of villages have been forcibly evacuated by soldiers intent on denying the PKK food and shelter.

The PKK's 10-year-old fight for control of the largely Kurdish southeast has killed over 13,000 rebels, soldiers and civilians.